

UNICEF stresses need to give high priority to Palestinian children

Uncertainty over funds and wages are a major hurdle in effectiveness of PNA, suggests Jolly

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A senior U.N. official has described the economic situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as sad and shocking and called for increased international support for the success of a plan of action to address some of the core problems facing the territories' children and women.

Richard Jolly, acting executive director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), said that in talks with Palestinian National Authority (PNA) Chairman Yasser Arafat and other PNA officials on Wednesday he emphasised the need to give high priority to the needs of children.

"Certainly, one was shocked and saddened to see the economic difficulties in Gaza and the West Bank," Dr. Jolly told the Jordan Times in an interview in Amman on Thursday.

"We were told that the World Bank has said Gaza is dying. And certainly we saw the difficulties there, and Chairman Arafat spoke about it to us, and we could see the consequences for health. Immunisation seems to have sunk," said Dr. Jolly. "This is of great concern."

Dr. Jolly noted that he had addressed a symposium on children in Gaza on Wednesday and said his central message was: "Gaza is a perfect example for when the first call is needed for children, both in bad times and good, in economically difficult times as in times when things

are better," he said.

"There is logical and very practical case for high priority to the most urgent needs of children," he said. "The needs of a new-born cannot wait for one week. We made that point very strongly."

It applies equally to the Israeli authorities in terms of allowing vaccines and other supplies to the territories as well as the international community "in granting urgent priority aid."

The PNA says that less than one-third of international aid pledged to the Palestinians in October 1993 has reached the territories, and the bulk of the aid is being used to pay the Palestinian police force.

The PNA's argument in support of the police force is backed by increasing security incidents inside and outside the autonomous Gaza Strip and Jericho and elsewhere in the West Bank as well as within Israel.

Adding further pressure to the situation is the Israeli demand that the PNA crack down on militants — something that cannot be done if the policemen and security forces are unhappy over their working conditions and salaries, the PNA officials say.

Dr. Jolly said UNICEF, drawing from its vast experience around the world, had drawn up a plan for the West Bank and Gaza several months ago and that the world organisation was optimistic that the detailed aspects of the programme could be in place in another three months.

The programme covers ur-

gent immediate needs as well as medium-term plans in reaching the main areas of health, education, nutrition, women, water and sanitation. "We have been helping the Palestinian Authority to prepare programmes of action to ensure that the priorities in the health and services sector are carried forward... a good start has been made," he said.

While UNICEF can help direct efforts towards cost-effective programmes and measures, the world body cannot extend massive aid to implement the programmes themselves.

It raised its profile and activities in the Palestinian territories in the last two years and is coordinating with the PNA — formed in July 1994 — after working mostly with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) for many years.

Asked how he assessed the efficiency of the staff of the PNA in implementing programmes, Dr. Jolly said he was not fully familiar with the situation. But he suggested the lack of funds and the erratic flow of aid to the PNA could be one of the reasons that led to severe international criticism of the self-rule authority and its organs.

"It is a mixed picture," he said. "Some ministries are working better than others. Health, in my understanding, is beginning to get going in a better form. Education is still needing to get a plan... a frame."

He said PNA officials had underlined the need for more schools. "They are now run-

ning triple shifts in many cases," he said. "There are many other things in education and how they are stitched together coherently... is obviously a critical issue."

But the uncertainty over salaries is one of the key factors that would determine the efficiency of staff, he said.

"I suspect, from my experience in many African countries today, that a major problem is the lack of incentive for civil servants," he said.

"If they do not get a reasonable, regular salary," then it was only natural that the uncertainty will affect the efficiency of the staff, he pointed out.

"I think there is great tendency on the part of the donors to blame the government and the civil servants for inefficiency and not to understand that no matter how brilliant we managers are... we would be reduced to inefficiency if we were to work in a situation with all the obstacles that are going on."

He noted that the PNA collected taxes of \$400,000 in the first month, and the revenue rose to about \$1 million thereafter only to go down again.

Such an uncertainty, he said, "what that must do to serious planning?"

"As far as I could see some of the people in planning are very well-trained... but how can they cope with the uncertainty? It is a major question. It has very serious implications for children."

Palestinian state only way to curb Israel — Abdul Shafi

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The Palestinians' former chief peace negotiator, Haidar Abdul Shafi, has said an independent Palestinian state was the only way to curb Israeli expansion.

Dr. Abdul Shafi, at a lecture on Thursday night in Abu Dhabi, said Israel had still not abandoned its claim to Arab lands.

"Israel still does not have international boundaries, so there is a possibility of a new expansion," he said.

"I am confident the establishment of an independent Palestinian state will put a brake to such an expansion," he said.

Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) signed the landmark self-rule deal in September 1993 and they have been locked in negotiations to implement the agreement which covers the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"We are deceiving ourselves when we talk about Oslo at a time when Israel has not stopped building settlements or dropped its expansionist claims," said Dr. Abdul Shafi, a critic of the

Oslo accords which led to the autonomy deal.

"But how we can counter such a dilemma?"

"I think through a united Palestinian position and an expanded decision-making base, which must be respected by all, including Abu Ammar," he said, referring to PLO leader Yasser Arafat.

"Honest legislative elections could be the right start to reach such a position," Dr. Abdul Shafi said.

Palestinians were encouraged to enter the U.S.-sponsored peace process after Washington led the military campaign to liberate Kuwait from Iraqi occupation in the 1991 Gulf war.

"We saw in this intervention an attempt by the Americans to enforce U.N. resolutions."

"Since they liberated a country that was occupied for months, we thought they could liberate another that was occupied for decades," he said.

"But it was all an illusion. America intervened to destroy Iraq rather than liberate a country under occupation."

Israel allows return home of 84 members of Fateh

GAZA CITY (Agencies) — Israel has authorised the return of 84 members of Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat's Fateh faction to the West Bank and Gaza including its former leader in Lebanon, Palestinian officials said Friday.

The Palestinians were on a list of 200 people drawn up by the Palestinian self-rule authority and handed to Israel to request their return from the diaspora.

Among the 84 permitted to return is Zeid Wehbe, Mr. Arafat's personal representative in Lebanon until 1990, the officials said.

Mr. Wehbe went to the PLO's headquarters in Tunis five years ago to head a coordination committee.

Khaled Hassan Sheikh, the PLO's representative in India, has also received permission to return. Palestinians on the list who were turned down by Israel were mainly military officials who carried out anti-Israeli attacks.

Palestinian National Authority officers gave no date for the PLO members to

cross through Israeli-controlled border checkpoints into the self-ruled areas.

About 9,000 Palestinians from across the Arab World have been allowed into Gaza and Jericho as part of a local police force.

Several thousand other PLO activists have returned to take up positions in Mr. Arafat's administration.

Meanwhile, a Palestinian intelligence service agent surrendered on Friday to Israeli police who have wanted him on kidnapping charges, his family said.

Anwar Awad, 23, is accused of kidnapping Palestinians in East Jerusalem, in defiance of an Israeli ban on Mr. Arafat's self-rule authority operating in East Jerusalem.

He was reportedly carrying out orders from the Palestinian preventive security chief in the West Bank, Colonel Jibril Rajjub, and took the suspects for questioning in the self-rule enclave of Jericho.

Mr. Awad is one of Mr. Rajjub's bodyguards.

Muslim scholars issue draft fatwas on AIDS

ABU DHABI (Agencies) — Islamic scholars from more than 50 Muslim countries said AIDS carriers who knowingly transmit the disease to others should be given punishments for premeditated murder if the recipient dies.

The scholars representing Islamic affairs ministries from Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) states also said a pregnant woman who has AIDS does not have the right to abortion even though she might pass it on to her fetus.

The more than 140 scholars who form the Council of Islamic Jurisprudence issued the decisions after their annual meeting on Thursday in Abu Dhabi. The OIC includes countries in Asia, the Gulf and the Middle East.

"Abortion is totally forbidden by Islam," they said late Thursday after four days of talks on AIDS, investment in banks and shares, trading in gold and silver, and other

issues.

The nearly 150 officials and sheikhs noted, however, that medical evidence showed pregnant mothers could infect their babies with the acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

The scholars, whose recommendations are usually adopted by most Muslim governments, agreed unanimously that an AIDS-infected person who transmits the killer disease to another must be killed if the victim dies.

The statement said if AIDS carriers knowingly infect others, "and the person dies from it, then the carrier should be given the punishment for premeditated murder."

The scholars issued another fatwa authorising mothers to breastfeed and bring up their children even if they have the AIDS virus. "There is no objection under Islam for this, unless a

medical report advises against it," they said in a final statement.

"In view of the fact that transmission of the infection from a pregnant carrier to her fetus does not happen most of the time, except at advanced term... or during childbirth, then it is not legally permissible to abort it," the statement said.

The decisions said mothers who have AIDS should not be separated from their children or prevented from breastfeeding, and that people with AIDS should not be isolated.

"A wife has the right to ask for separation from her husband if he is suffering from AIDS on the grounds the disease is transmitted mainly through sexual contact," it added.

"Regarding isolation of AIDS victims, it is unacceptable... since available medical information proved the dis-

ease is not transmitted through normal contact... but through sexual intercourse, contaminated blood and pregnancy."

It also recommended that measures during the annual Hajj to Saudi Arabia, which starts next month, "to confirm pilgrims are free of contagious diseases, especially AIDS."

The council's decision will only become law if they are issued by Islamic authorities in the countries concerned. It also depends on whether the country uses the Sharia as the basis for law.

Mahmoud Salem, a council official, told Reuters on Friday this was the first time that the council which agrees on draft fatwas, or edicts, had issued them on.

"The decisions are considered a group fatwa from which individual fatwas will be issued in the 51 states," he said.

Israeli tourists fail to bring windfall to Jordan

By Mohammad Hasni
Agence France Presse

MADABA — Israeli tourists, have disappointed Jordanians' hopes of a gold rush since the border between the two neighbours was opened up by last October's peace treaty.

The town of Madaba, 35 kilometres south of Amman, has become a regular stop on the tourist trail because of its Byzantine church with a map of Palestine in mosaic.

But owners of souvenir shops here say they prefer free-spending Westerners to Israelis for whom Jordanian products represent no novelty.

"Israeli tourists are tight with their money," said one frustrated shopkeeper after displaying a range of beaded carpets to an Israeli woman. She looked at them all, offered half the asking price then walked out of his shop empty-handed.

"I prefer the Americans and Europeans who have never seen Jordanian craftwork before. Our products are not very interesting to Israelis who are used to seeing them on display in Old Jerusalem," another shopkeeper said.

Groups of Israelis gathered in Madaba around the sixth century Franciscan church listening attentively to a Jordanian guide talking about the restored collection of mosaics.

The Israelis no longer arouse curiosity in the town. "We don't even notice them any more," said a grocer in the souk.

But the authorities are still nervous about their presence in the country. At the Roman ruins of Jerash, 40 kilometres north of Amman, tourist groups are discreetly escorted by police.

The security services also keep a close eye on their coaches.

"One security agent for each vehicle," said a driver with a thinly veiled reticence towards his Israeli "cousins," as Jordanians call the visitors.

"We have made peace and we are all behind the (ruling) Hashemite banner but we can't allow Israelis to try to falsify history," he said.

Some Israelis, he said, laid claim to historic sites, such as Mount Aaron near Petra, 260 kilometres south of Amman, reputedly the site of the tomb of the Jewish people's first great priest.

The visitors have fared little better in the Jordanian press, where they have been accused of thefts and attempts to defraud their hosts.

Such incidents have also been reported in the Israeli press, notably the cases of a couple who "moved out" of their hotel room and a tourist who was spending forged dollars.

In spite of his country's

ambivalence, Tourism Minister Abdul Ilah Khatib sees no difference between the 20,000 Israelis who have visited since the start of the year and the growing number of European and American tourists.

But even he acknowledges that some of his compatriots lack enthusiasm. "There is a certain reticence towards Israeli tourists among some people," he said.

Jordan, which has been a big rise in visitors this year, operates a quota system allowing in 900 Israeli tourists each day under the terms of the peace treaty signed on Oct. 26.

On Tuesday the Jordanian and Israeli tourism ministers signed a cooperation accord. It provided for greater cooperation between the two neighbours' tourism organisations but did not change the quota of Israeli tourists allowed into Jordan nor lift a restriction on Israeli vehicles entering the country.

Israeli travel agents have threatened to boycott the Kingdom if Israel tourists are not allowed to enter freely.

But Jordanians, which became only the second Arab country after Egypt to sign peace with Israel, refuses to increase the daily quota for the moment saying it does not have room for them all.

On Thursday, the two countries exchanged ambas-

Lebanon jetliner turned away from Jeddah

BEIRUT (AP) — Saudi Arabian authorities refused to allow a Lebanese airliner to land at the Red Sea Port of Jeddah Friday, apparently because the passengers included a Muslim fundamentalist cleric.

The pilot of the Middle East Airlines (MEA) Boeing 747, flying from Khartoum, capital of Sudan, reported that the Saudis also refused to allow the plane to land at another airport in the Kingdom.

No explanation was given to the pilot, who flew the 707 back to Khartoum, the sources reported.

The Lebanese flag carrier was later told by Saudi authorities that the dispute arose from a bureaucratic mix-up over the paperwork relating to the flight number, the sources said.

But they speculated that the flights was turned back because Sheikh Saeed Shaaban, a Lebanese Sunni Muslim fundamentalist leader was on board.

Sheikh Shaaban attended a conference of Islamic clerics in Khartoum last week. The turned-back 707 was scheduled to fly on to Beirut from Jeddah.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION	
Tel: 773111-19	
PROGRAMME TWO	
14:00	Harry and Henderson
15:00	Witness to Survival
15:30	Road to Avonlea
16:30	Tarzan
17:00	Le Pain Noir
19:00	News in French
19:15	Fa Uti Pas Rivera
19:30	The Bold and the Beautiful
20:00	Life in the Freezer
20:30	The Nanny
21:00	Dive the World
21:15	Cape Rebel
22:00	News in English
22:30	Feature film: "Deadly Vows"
00:59	Tamara
PRAYER TIMES	
05:52	Fajr
07:12	(Sunrise) Dhuha
13:37	Dhuhr
16:12	Asr
20:43	Maghrib
21:23	Isha
CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church, Sweith, Tel. 870701	
Assembly of God Church, Tel. 62785	
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590, Church of the Assumption Tel. 637440	
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757, Transfiguration Church Tel. 623566, Church of the Assumption Tel. 623541	
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 623543	
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331	
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261	
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751	
Armenian International Church Tel. 625256	
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328	
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 664195	
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932, Church of Nazarene Tel. 675691, The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295	
WEATHER	
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.	
Relative warm weather conditions will prevail with temperatures rising further, clouds appearing at different altitudes, and winds southeasterly moderate. In Aqaba, it will be warm and dusty with winds northerly moderate and seas calm.	
Min./Max. temp. Amman 12 / 27	

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS	
NIGHT DUTY	
AMMAN:	
Dr. Yousef Nassr	751144
Dr. Ghaleb Zaidich	736011
Dr. Walid Al Masri	675485
Dr. Hisham Kattar	790286
First pharmacy	661912
Ferdows pharmacy	778336
Al Asena pharmacy	637055
Nasroukh pharmacy	623672
Al Saian pharmacy	636730
Yacoub pharmacy	644945
Shmeisani pharmacy	637660
Najib pharmacy	847432
IRBID:	
Dr. Mohammad Al Hilla	277773
Alquds pharmacy	(-)
ZARQA:	
Dr. Walid Halaeh	982799
EMERGENCIES	
Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	661111
Civil Defence Emergency	630341
Fire Brigade	621111, 637777
Rescue Police	617101
Blood Bank	775121
Highway Police	843402
Traffic Police	896390
Public Security Department	630321
Hotel Complaints	605800
Price Complaints	661176
Water and Sewerage	
Complaints	897467
Amman Municipality	
Complaints	787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)	121
Overseas Calls	010230
Central Amman Telephone	
Repairs	623101
Abdullah Telephone Repairs	661101
Radio Jordan	774111
Water Authority	680100
Jordan Electricity Authority	
Electric Power Company	636381
RJ Flight Information	06-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport	08-53200

HOSPITALS	
AMMAN:	
Husseini Medical Centre	813813/332
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn.	6428146
IBRD:	
Jabal Amman Maternity	642362
Mathias, J. Amman	636140
Palestine, Shmeisani	6647144
Shmeisani Hospital	669131
University Hospital	845845
Al-Muasher Hospital	6672779
The Islamic, Abdali	66612757
Al-Ahli, Abdali	6641646
Italian, Al-Muhajir	77101/3
Army, Marika	891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital	60224050
Amal Hospital	674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery	865199
ZARQA:	
Zarqa Govt. Hospital	(09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital	(09)990960
IBN SINIA Hospital	(09)985732
Al-Hikma Modern Hospital	(09)990990
Princess Basma Hospital	(02)725555
Greek Catholic Hospital	(02)727275
Al-Nafes Hospital	(02)747100
AQABA:	
Princess Haya Hospital	(03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER	
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT	
ARRIVALS	
Royal Jordanian (RJ)	
Flights (Terminal 1)	
06:25	Jakarta, Singapore (RJ)
06:35	Amman (RJ)
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UNICEF head ends visit after attending world health day celebrations

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The head of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Richard Jolly, left Jordan on Friday after attending celebrations in Amman marking World Health Day that focused on efforts to eradicate polio, a major threat to children all over the world.

This year's World Health Day, which fell on Friday, was being held under the theme "A World Without Polio."

Immunisation is the answer to polio, and UNICEF, in cooperation with governments and non-governmental organisations, social and religious groups and other concerned institutions and individuals, is behind an international campaign to eliminate polio from the world by the year 2000.

In an interview with the Jordan Times, Dr. Jolly, who assumed office as executive head of UNICEF in January, noted that only 100,000 cases

of polio were reported around the world in 1994, compared to 500,000 in 1985.

In Jordan, four polio cases were reported in 1994, and the Kingdom's health ministry, in cooperation with UNICEF, has launched a campaign to immunise all children against the disease. More than 96 per cent success was reported after the first stage of the immunisation last month.

While Jordan is able to eliminate polio in its territory much before the target year of 2000, the fight against the disease will be won when the entire earth is cleared of it, said Dr. Jolly.

"It cannot be Jordan alone, anymore than it can be Israel alone, because with people crossing border, they can bring wild polio virus in, and polio can spread," he noted. "We will only eradicate polio world-wide only when we eradicate polio from every corner of the earth."

"There is a great deal of hope that we can succeed," he said.

One of the key events during Dr. Jolly's visit to Jordan was the World Health Day celebration organised by the Ministry of Health in cooperation with the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Addressing the gathering at the celebration, Dr. Jolly paid tribute to the success achieved by Jordan in health and education for its children.

"The standing and prestige of nations" should be addressed less by their military and economic prowess and more by the "protection they provide for the survival, health, growth and education of their children," Dr. Jolly said.

"Jordan is a shining example for emulation by other countries," he said. Jordan is ranked the 50th among the world countries, including the industrialised countries, in infant mortality rate, and 17th among developing countries in general health and education for children.

In comments to the Jordan

Times, Dr. Jolly noted that, in Jordan, "equality between boys and girls in access to health and education is pretty good; life expectancy very impressive; nutrition is good."

"So in these respects, we think, Jordan, a country of modest income with a per capita income of \$1,100, is quite impressive," he said.

At the same time, he noted that Cuba, which has a per capita income of \$1,170, Colombia (\$1,130) and Sri Lanka (\$540) all had a lower infant mortality rate than Jordan.

"We think (Jordan) could do better," said Dr. Jolly, who assumed office as acting head of UNICEF after veteran James Grant resigned in January, only a few days before he died on Jan. 28.

Dr. Jolly was also received by Her Royal Highness Princess Basma, who is a special U.N. ambassador.

Dr. Jolly also met with staff at the UNICEF's Middle East and North Africa regional office in Amman.

Court sets April 15 as new date for Abequa trial

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Criminal Court Thursday set April 15 as the new date for the trial of Mohammad Ismail Abequa, a naturalised U.S. citizen accused of killing his wife and kidnapping his two children in order to allow witnesses from the United States to travel to Jordan and testify in the case. The court has not yet asked the witnesses to testify in the case.

Mr. Abequa, a Jordanian-American citizen, is accused of strangling his wife, Nihal, on July 4, in her Panapany Trolley-Hill, New Jersey home over a dispute over the custody of their two children, ages 6 and 3.

The court also ruled that the defendant attorney's contest, presented to court on Monday, regarding the validity of the evidence collected by the Prosecutor General Khalid Darwish in the U.S. was premature.

Mr. Darwish, who travelled to the U.S. in March to gather evidence, presented the court with copies of the Jordanian authorities' decision to allow him to travel to the U.S. "with the approval and knowledge of the U.S. government."

"This is not the first time that a Jordanian prosecutor general travels outside the Kingdom to investigate a case and the evidence that was gathered was used in the court to serve the case," Mr. Darwish said in response to Mr. Abequa's attorney.

Mr. Darwish cited three cases when prosecutor generals travelled abroad to gather evidence.

In his argument, the prosecutor general said that nothing in the law stipulates that investigations must not be conducted outside the country.

"Jordan has jurisdiction over the actions of its national no matter where the alleged offence occurred if the other country approves it," he said. "Based on (that) travelled to the U.S.," Mr. Darwish, who had asked for the maximum penalty for the defendant, told a packed courtroom.

Defence Attorney Masoud Khalifeh, who insisted on his earlier contest, protested against including copies of the Jordanian authorities' approval of Mr. Darwish trip to the U.S. in the case file on the grounds of irrelevance and said that the prosecutor general must only reply to the contest presented by the attorney.

Presiding Judge Abdul Rahman Tawfiq adjourned the court for half-an-hour to examine the attorney's contest and the response of the prosecutor general.

At the end of the session, Dr. Tawfiq said the court cannot dismiss any evidence or witnesses before hearing them and it is the right of the court and the defence attorney to listen to the evidence presented. Only after reviewing the evidence will the court decide whether to include or exclude it.

One legal lawyer told the Jordan Times that what is relevant in this case is whether the alleged evidence could be admitted in a court of law. In order to be admitted as evidence, it has to meet the requirements of the law on evidence, he said.

During the first session, Mr. Abequa told the court that he was not guilty of the charges of premeditated murder and the kidnapping of the children. If convicted, Mr. Abequa could face the death penalty.

Muasher, Shamir to present credentials Monday

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan and Israel have implemented their agreement to have full diplomatic relations, with the Kingdom's first ambassador to the Jewish state arriving in Tel Aviv and his Israeli counterpart arriving in Amman Thursday.

Jordan's ambassador, Marwan Muasher, travelled to Israel across the Sheikh Hussein Bridge north of the Kingdom while Shimon Shamir crossed the King Hussein Bridge. The exchange of ambassadors took place almost five months after the two countries signed the peace treaty in October.

In a departure statement, Dr. Muasher, a former spokesman for Jordan's peace negotiators with Israel, said his job to consolidate Jordanian-Israeli relations was largely dependent on the success of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.

"If peace is to be permanent and comprehensive, the citizens of Jordan must feel that the Palestinian track is going in the right direction, and that the Arab-Israeli conflict is handled in the proper manner," he said.

"Short of that, it is difficult to perceive a peace that develops from being on the official level to being on the popular level," said Dr. Muasher, a Purdue University graduate who also served as director of the Jordan Information Bureau in Washington.

In comments carried by the Associated Press after his arrival in Tel Aviv, Dr. Muasher, 38, also said that one of the key outstanding issues between Jordan and Israel was the fate of the Palestinian refugees.

"The refugee problem needs to be resolved," said Dr. Muasher, who holds a doctorate in computer sciences. "There are a number of challenges ahead of us. We are trying to bridge the gap over large differences we have with Israel."

Dr. Shamir, in arrival comments, also stressed that his task was to consolidate Jordanian-Israeli relations and cooperation.

The ambassador, a fluent Arabic speaker who served as his country's first diplomatic envoy to Egypt, said his government was aware that peace at the people's level would take time. But, he said, it "can be achieved

through hard work and, above all, open dialogue among all members of the society."

Jordan and Israel opened embassies in Tel Aviv and Amman in December, but have yet to find permanent premises. The Israeli embassy in Amman operates out of the Forte Grant Hotel, while the Jordanian mission is housed in the Dan Hotel in Tel Aviv.

Dr. Shamir, 62, is expected to present his credentials to His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on April 10, and Dr. Muasher will present his credentials to Israeli President Ezer Weizman on the same day.

Dr. Muasher met with Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres on Friday. The meeting was officially billed as a courtesy encounter, but it was expected to include a brief discussion of bilateral issues.

Dr. Shamir, who arrived here accompanied by his wife Dani, has located a residence in Amman, while Dr. Muasher is still looking for one in Tel Aviv. His wife Lynne and family will join him only after he finds a residence.

Registration for municipal polls to start April 11

AMMAN (Petra) — Registration of voters for municipal council elections starts Tuesday in preparation for the July 11 elections, which will be held in 259 municipalities.

Heads of municipal election committees have already started forming registration committees in various parts of the Kingdom. The registration process will take 37 days. To avoid duplication of registration, voters' family registration books will be stamped by a special stamp carrying the name of the area where voters live. Voters lists will be announced on May 5, and then contestations and appeals will be examined. Decisions on appeals and contestations will be passed on June 27.

Contractors to hold meeting

AMMAN (Petra) — Arab Contractors Federation will hold its fourth meeting here on April 17, according to Mohammad Issa Murad, president of the Jordanian Contractors Association.

The three-day conference will discuss working papers and studies prepared by several Jordanian and Arab economic institutions.

The papers cover, among other things, the impact of comprehensive Arab development on the construction sector, role of Arab contractors in the overall development process, inter-Arab cooperation and prospects of forming major Arab contractors consortiums and groupings.

CORRECTION

Due to a typographic error in a story that appeared in Thursday's edition, the Jordan Times said the World Bank was lending Jordan \$80 million to help the Kingdom's education sector. The amount of the loan is \$60 million. We regret any inconvenience caused.

Travel agents question Kingdom's ability to accommodate more tourists

By Amy Henderson
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The agreement on tourism signed Wednesday between Jordan and Israel was touted by officials as a breakthrough for Jordan's tourism industry but was greeted with apprehension by travel agents in Amman.

The five-page agreement emphasises tourism from abroad as a top priority for both countries, calling for cooperation in marketing and promotional activities to attract foreign tourists for extended stays and laying the foundation for highlighting Jordan as a touristic destination.

"These are the two important factors highlighted in this agreement," said Ghassan Mufleh, undersecretary of the Ministry of Tourism.

"The agreement adds to the importance of regional tourism," said Mr. Mufleh. "Regional tourism becomes much more attractive for people who have long distances to travel — it makes more sense as far as time and expense are concerned."

"Joint marketing will also help our industry," he said. Israel's sophisticated tourism industry boasts more than 200 travel and tourism agencies worldwide, who are in a strong position to sell Jordan to wayward travellers.

But travel agents suggested that the agreement may be premature for Jordan's developing industry. "It is an advantage since we need to promote ourselves," said Ibrahim Ozgul, general manager of Nabatean Tours, "but we don't have the infrastructure or the mentality yet to handle the volume we are talking about."

"Chaos is prevailing with buses and hotels," he continued, "and if we don't rectify things, we will run it for ourselves," he said. All the marketing in the world cannot compensate for had word-of-mouth from tourists who take home a bad impression, he said. "We need real planning now and a new mentality."

Tourism is already an important source of income for both countries with Israel

attracting more than two million visitors annually and Jordan hosting an average of 500,000 foreign tourists per year, with the revenue accounting for nearly 15 per cent of the Kingdom's gross national product. The two states are planning to see a significant increase in the number of tourists as they capitalise on the peace agreement which they signed last October.

Already Jordan has seen an increase in foreign visitors. Each day, the number of Israeli tourists alone nearly reaches the ceiling of 900 Israelis allowed to cross the Jordan-Israeli border on a daily basis. This figure does not include Israelis entering Jordan on foreign passports.

At tourist attractions and on the streets throughout the Kingdom, tourists are appearing in greater numbers than ever before. Occupancy rates at Amman's five-star hotels have approximately reached 80-90 per cent since the beginning of the year, and one hotel claims it is 100 per cent full until the end of June. None of the hotels see the end in sight — yet.

Of those who support the peace accords with Israel, few object to the tourism agreement with Israel in principle, in light of Jordan's need for the money generated by tourism. But those in the tourism industry are wondering how Jordan can accommodate an increased number of tourists.

"If we overmarket ourselves, where do we put the people," asked NET Tours General Manager George Bawab. "We don't have enough hotel beds, enough knowledgeable guides, enough buses... We are already having problems because we are not prepared."

"I already have had a bad time finding room for 490 Americans who are coming this spring," he added. "So if we rush into this marketing thing, what's the sense — it will backfire."

The Ministry of Tourism estimates that the number of hotel beds needs to be at least doubled to support any substantial increase in tourism which generates an estimated

revenue of JD 650 million annually.

"I don't buy this idea of regional tourism," said one travel agent. "I feel this agreement pulls the rug from under our feet since we are not prepared for much more tourism than we are already seeing. We will see more tourism, but we won't be destination number one. Rather we will be sold as a sideline (to Israel)," he said.

Just on the verge of the "tourist season" travel agents are already telling horror stories. One claim he had confirmed a group of about 60 tourists months in advance of their arrival at one of Amman's five-star hotels only to be told when they arrived that there were no rooms available. Another complained that a booking of 22 rooms for early next month, which was confirmed in February, was cancelled April 5 to make room for another group. "Is this anyway to do business," he asked.

A third agent in Amman said that travel agents are at the mercy of hotels and bus service. "Let me give you an example," he said. "I have been doing business here with the JETT (bus company) for years. I have a group coming tomorrow," he said, "and they want JD 5,000 before they take my group anywhere."

"I have good credit with them — I always pay on time," he claimed, "but how can we continue to operate like this? How can we continue to promote Jordan with such chaos?"

"I don't disagree with cooperation with Israel in promoting Jordan," Mr. Ozgul concluded, "but we need to plan and go slowly otherwise this will backfire."

By Rima Cortawhi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The introduction of arthroscopic reconstruction of shoulder dislocations to Jordan is a long anticipated milestone in medical development, according to Hanna Kavar, orthopaedic consultant and specialist in arthroscopy. This minor repair operation, he said, will irreversibly solve the problem of recurrent shoulder dislocations and will certainly replace the currently followed unfavourable surgical alternative.

Shoulder bone dislocation occurs mostly in an anterior direction (from the front), according to Dr. Kavar. In the event of accidental falling, a harsh fall causing the bone head (the ball) to be displaced forward from its normal position at the shoulder blade (the socket) results in tearing the strong connective tissue — the capsule — (forming Bankart lesion) which protects the ball and socket, said Dr. Kavar. That, he said, causes agonising pain as the head comes in contact with the nervous tissues at the front.

"Doctors can then put the head back in place leaving the lesion to heal slightly," Dr. Kavar said. However, the slit in the tissue remains, and should similar accidents recur, the head would become susceptible to be displaced at the slightest abduction and external rotation (movements of the shoulder), according to Dr. Kavar.

Patients are then faced with the difficult task of choosing between suffering shoulder dislocations or undergoing surgical repair of the lesion. "Most patients tolerate their recurrent condition rather than go through the surgery due to the significant inconveniences and possible complications involved," said Dr. Kavar.

The major surgical operation takes about two hours as incisions are created to reach the torn part or lesion by cutting through layers of soft tissue, according to Dr. Kavar. After suturing the lesion, each layer must be reconstructed, which naturally leaves everlasting scars. Then the patient's shoulder has to remain immobilised (by cast etc.) for six weeks before physiotherapy is applied for two to three months.

"Obviously, this turns out to be very time consuming and highly costly, overall — especially considering the amount of time taken by the patient off work. Moreover, in most patients, stiffness remains to a certain degree and the shoulder is never back to its normal state," said Dr. Kavar.

This highlights the need for a more favourable alternative solution, he said. "The repair of shoulder dislocations by arthroscopy has been done in Europe and the U.S. for the past seven to eight years," said Dr. Kavar, adding that the success of the procedure necessitates extensive training and building of skills as well as expensive instrumentation. "Building skills in arthroscopy is done by primarily conducting the less complicated knee operations, which have been practised in Jordan since 1985," said Dr. Kavar. Fortunately, the adequate training, and currently available instrumentation, the arthroscopic shoulder repair method can now

Ministry of Awqaf to utilise property

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs has created a new department for Waqf (Islamic trust property) investments, according to the minister Abdul Salam Abbad.

Dr. Abbad said the new department would be entrusted with drawing up plans for identifying the best ways for the optimal use of waqf property in accordance with the provisions of the Islamic Sharia law.

Among the other responsibilities of the newly-created department are proposing development projects, preparation of feasibility studies and ensuring the necessary funding for such projects, Dr. Abbad said.

He stressed that the ministry would make every possible

effort to finance 16 investment projects costing almost JD 45 million. These projects had already been discussed, and feasibility studies proved them cost-effective.

Dr. Abbad said the ministry is considering issuing bonds for public to raise funds for these projects. A committee, chaired by deputy governor of the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ), and including the secretaries general of the ministries of Finance, Industry and Awqaf, representatives of the Amman Financial Market and the private sector, will supervise the issuance of bonds.

The ministry's income from Awqaf resources in the East Bank in 1994 totalled JD 610,583 up from JD 200,981 in 1980.

Japanese voluntary group leaves Kingdom

AMMAN (Petra) — A Japanese voluntary group Friday left Amman at the end of a two-year voluntary work mission during which it participated in city planning, training and rehabilitation activities.

The team members participated in a city planning project in Sarou area near Salt, and cooperated with Queen Alia Fund (QAF) Centre for Rehabilitation of the Handicapped at Mutah University in Karak. It also worked with the National Music Conservatory of Noor Al Hussein

Foundation.

In a departure statement, the group members said their assignment falls within the context of enhancing ties of friendship and cooperation between their country and Jordan and exchanging views and experiences with Jordanian youth.

They said that their government intends to send more volunteers to perform voluntary work in Jordan, particularly in the areas of health, education, sports and rehabilitation of the handicapped.



Prince Ra'd bin Zeid to receive award in Morocco

AMMAN (Petra) — Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd bin Zeid leaves Sunday for Morocco to receive the Arab Council for Ophthalmology Award and to address the 3rd International Ophthalmologists Conference, which will be held in Marrakech on Monday. Prince Ra'd was awarded for his role in caring for the blind in Jordan and for his efforts to secure corneas to help the blind to restore sight.

Prince Ra'd said he was grateful for this recognition, adding that the trophy is in fact an honouring for His Majesty King Hussein who directed special attention to ophthalmology and who was the first to encourage cornea donations.

Prince Ra'd said he will discuss with council officials preparations for the 4th International Conference of Ophthalmologists which will be held in Amman next year.

Around 2,000 ophthalmologists will attend the conference, Prince Ra'd said.

Arthroscopic reconstruction offers effective alternative to surgery in treating shoulder dislocations

By Rima Cortawhi
Special to the Jordan Times

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Austrian Professor Herbert Resh performs arthroscopic reconstruction to treat a patient with a shoulder dislocation

be safely initiated, he said. "This method simply involves creating three punctures (of 4mm diameter) on the patient's shoulder. The hole for the arthroscope enables internal tissues to be viewed on a TV screen; the hole for the shaver allows the instrument to clean out the internal surfaces making them suitable for repair," said Dr. Kavar. The third puncture gives way to a drill which forms holes on the shoulder blade so that torn tissues can be transfixed at the bone via "suture" bio-absorbable screws,

"which are highly recommended for their ability to become perfectly well-integrated parts of the body after some time," said Dr. Kavar.

The operation takes one and a half hours and the patient can go home on the same day, with his arm having to be kept in a sling for a week. "The arm can be moved on the same day, and shoulder movement is allowed on the third day. After that the shoulder returns back to normal, and patients can even play sports at leisure," said Dr. Kavar.

The first arthroscopic repair operations for reconstruction of recurrent shoulder dislocations using suture are to be done on Sunday and Monday by Dr. Kavar and his Austrian guest of honour Professor Herbert Resh, chairman of the Orthopaedic Department at Salzburg General Hospital. Dr. Resh has done more than 5000 repair operations for the Bankart lesion and is one of the leaders in this process worldwide. "Certainly number one in his country," according to Dr. Kavar.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

SECOND ARAB DRAMA FESTIVAL

Two plays entitled "Life for Death" and "The Theatre of Sivasopole" respectively at 7:00 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. at the Royal Cultural Centre.

EXHIBITIONS

Exhibition of art by Moroccan artist Farid Belkhatia at Darat Al Funun of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation.
Exhibition of Palestinian embroidery at Goethe-Institut.
Exhibition of art by Yassin Atiyeh and Yassin Al Muhammadawi at Baladina Art Gallery.
Ceramics exhibition by artist Samer Al Khaffaji at Umm Uttheina Gallery.

Exhibition of art by William Golding at the British Council.
Exhibition of Egyptian products at Amman International Exhibition, Marj Al Hammam (Tel. 689141).
Exhibition of copper sculptures by Iraqi artist Mohammad Hussein Judi at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture and Art.
Exhibition of graphic works by Rafiq Lahham at Darat Al Funun. Also displaying works by contemporary Arab artists.
Exhibition of art by Leo Rialp at Instituto Cervantes (the Spanish Cultural Centre).
Exhibition of prize-winning paintings by Czech students at the Royal Cultural Centre.
Exhibition of oil paintings by Hamed Chantout at the Balqa Art Gallery, Fuheis.
Exhibition of oil paintings by Youssef Badawi at Alla Art Gallery.

Major's Conservative Party wiped out in Scottish Polls

EDINBURGH (R) — Scottish voters delivered a mighty snub to Britain's ruling Conservatives in local elections, encouraging the opposition Labour Party to claim victory was at hand in the next national vote.

The Conservatives won none of the councils contested and earned the backing of just one Scottish voter in 10 in the Thursday polls. Election results were completed Friday.

The Labour Party, in the first large-scale test of its new centrist since Tony Blair was elected leader last July, can now call Scotland its electoral field.

And it gleefully pointed to the result as a harbinger of still bigger spoils to be won in the next general election, which is expected in 1997.

"This is quite a remarkable result by any standards. And

it's not just an anti-Tory vote," George Robertson, Labour's Scotland spokesman, told BBC Radio. "Who knows when the general election is going to come, but we will maintain that momentum."

"We are pushing back all our opponents," Mr. Robertson said. Labour seized 20 of the 29 councils as the Conservatives, in power since 1979, crashed to a new low in Scotland, with just 79 candidates returned in the 1,100 seats up for grabs.

The overnight humiliation will pile new pressure on Prime Minister John Major, accused of offering scant leadership to a government that is careening from crisis to crisis. He faces further trouble at English and Welsh local elections next month.

The defeat — far worse than a gloomy government had feared — will foment more dissent among party insiders who want a dynamic new leader to oust Major. "What it reflects is disunity in the party," Scottish Secretary Ian Lang told BBC Radio. "Quite clearly it's not what we're actually doing that is wrong, it's the fact that we're showing ourselves to be disunited."

Others went much further. "It is a pretty disastrous night for us all round and a good night for Labour. There are no words I can find to describe it otherwise," Junior Interior Minister Michael Forsyth said.

Labour's Blair said the results vindicated his party's shift to the middle ground of British politics.

"The people of Scotland are turning to the new

Labour Party and rejecting in greater numbers than ever before the Conservative Party that has betrayed them and is out of touch."

Scotland has long proved an electoral wasteland for the Conservatives, but the results came as the government is divided over issues including health care, taxes and Europe.

According to television estimates, Labour won 47 per cent of the vote Thursday, the Scottish National Party (SNP) 27 per cent, the Conservatives 11 per cent and the Liberal Democrats eight. The SNP won control of one council.

A national poll in Friday's Daily Telegraph underscored the shift to Labour since the 1980s, giving Labour a massive 35 point lead over the Conservatives.

Fujimori appeals for majority in Congress

LIMA (R) — President Alberto Fujimori, in his last pitch to voters before campaigning for Sunday's elections ended, said he needed a majority in Congress to continue his economic program which could create more jobs.

Mr. Fujimori, who is the favourite in the vote, said late Thursday that the government's free-market orientation had slashed inflation and spurred economic growth projected to hold at a steady pace of about five per cent over the next few years.

That, in turn, would bring in more investment to create jobs and higher tax revenues which could be channelled to the poorest sectors of Peruvian society, he added.

"That is why it is important for the executive (branch) to count on a majority in Congress who can back him in his programme," Mr. Fujimori said in a television interview which ended just as the midnight deadline for campaigning ran out.

The last polls showed Mr. Fujimori with a comfortable lead but also showed he would not likely be able to win a majority in the one-chamber, 120-member Congress.

Mr. Fujimori, who closed Congress three years ago saying he needed a stronger hand to push through economic reforms and wipe out a Maoist guerrilla insurgency, said he would not take that action again but added he did not plan to make alliances.

"If I propose building three schools a day and the Congress won't approve the budget, I'll go on television to appeal to the people," he said.

President Fidel Ramos, due to visit Ipi Saturday, had ordered an all-out assault on the raiders after the Ipi attack, the worst single act of violence for 20 years in a long-festering Muslim insurgency in the southern Philippines.

In a rare disclosure on the now-disbanded nuclear weapons programme, the managing director of weapons maker Armscor, Tielman De Waal, detailed the country's former nuclear strategy for foreign reporters.

Mr. De Waal conceded that the programme used technology from Israel and unnamed other countries, but said none of them wittingly supplied material to help South Africa obtain the bomb. Anti-nuclear activists have said South Africa also got key technology from the United States, Germany and France.

The uranium used was extracted locally, Mr. De Waal said, and the bombs would have been delivered by aircraft. A testing ground was set up in the Kalahari Desert, but never used.

The programme was kept in strict secrecy and less than 800 people in the country of 41 million had any knowledge of it, including politicians, military officials, scientists and workers, Mr. De Waal said.

The briefing came as the state-owned firm, which armed South Africa's military during years of sanctions against the old white minority regime, was seeking a new role by offering management expertise to President Nelson



Benazir Bhutto (centre), prime minister of Pakistan, signs a guest register as she is escorted to a breakfast meeting on Capitol Hill by U.S. Rep. Benjamin Gilman (right), R-NV, chairman of the House International Relations Committee. Ms. Bhutto is on a 10 day official visit to the U.S. and is scheduled to meet with President Bill Clinton April 11 (AFP photo)

Bhutto lobbies U.S. on sanctions repeal

WASHINGTON (AP) — Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan received encouragement on Capitol Hill for her appeal to end U.S. economic sanctions against her country.

"I'm impressed with her arguments, and I'll try and follow up," said Senate Majority leader Bob Dole after meeting the prime minister in his Capitol office.

But the Kansas Republican stopped short of any overt commitment to press for repeal of a law that halts U.S. assistance to Pakistan as long as it is believed to be pursuing a nuclear weapons programme.

President Bill Clinton said Monday that "we should review the policy," set out in a law authored by Republican Sen. Larry Pressler, who has strenuously opposed any suggestion that it be repealed.

The Pressler amendment was invoked in 1990 against Pakistan when President George Bush was unable to

certify that the South Asian country was not pursuing a nuclear weapon programme. As a result, delivery was halted on 28 F-16 jet fighters already fully paid for by the Pakistan government.

"They can't have the equipment or the money they've paid," said Sen. Dole. "It's a tough question."

"We would like to work with the United States for non-proliferation, but unfortunately the Pressler Amendment is standing in the way of non-proliferation," said Ms. Bhutto.

During an earlier closed meeting with the House international relations committee, Ms. Bhutto also argued for repeal of the Pressler Amendment.

Rep. Sam Gejdenson, a D-Conn., said that she argued that with Pakistan's neighbour and rival India already a nuclear power, it was unfair to punish her country for seeking parity.

"Under that argument, we could spread nuclear weapons all over the globe," Gejdenson said. It would be far better, he said, to convince both countries to renounce nuclear weapons.

U.S. officials acknowledge that four years of sanctions against Pakistan have not succeeded in halting its determination to match India's nuclear capability.

The other major item on Ms. Bhutto's agenda during her 10-day visit to the United States was attracting foreign investment. She describes Pakistan as a moderate Muslim state that has long ties to the United States.

In a recent interview with American journalists in Pakistan, she said her message during her visit would be: "Help me strengthen the forces of moderation by taking away the factors that fuel fanaticism."

Ms. Bhutto is scheduled to meet Mr. Clinton at the White House Tuesday.

Japanese frustrated by politics as important local elections approach

TOKYO (AFP) — Faced with a devastating earthquake, terrorist attacks and a faltering economic recovery, Japanese voters appear frustrated with a political process seemingly unable to deal with the country's problems.

As they head to the polls Sunday for important local elections, including the powerful governorships of Tokyo and Osaka, many Japanese express confusion about all the recent realignments among political parties.

"I think the political parties themselves have become nebulous," said Kenichi Enomoto, 58, a Tokyo office worker, adding that he is unsure of what most of the parties stand for.

"I wish I could vote for someone who represents a party, but now I don't

know," he said. Polls taken this week show that nonpartisan candidates enjoy growing support, with independents in the Tokyo and Osaka races threatening to win the governor seats from candidates backed by Japan's ruling coalition parties.

The degree of alienation with the political establishment has reached the point that 57 per cent of those surveyed by the Asahi Evening News this week say they have no allegiance to a party.

"The people do not have confidence in politics or political parties," said Kenzo Uchida, a political science professor at Tokai University. "This is one of the most serious issues in this local election."

Prof. Uchida describes the Jan. 17 Kobe earthquake as a

turning point in Japanese politics, when the government was slow in responding to the deaths of more than 5,000 people and more than one hundred billion dollars in damage.

"The slowness of the response caused a public outrage," he said. "It exposed the cracks in the coalition."

The deadly nerve gas attack on the Tokyo subway last month, which killed 11 people and injured thousands, along with the assassination attempt on the country's police chief, have cast serious doubt on the government's competence, he said.

The government has also been slow to enact economic reforms, such as cutting taxes and deregulating the economy.

S. Africa's nuclear deterrent aimed at Western help

PRETORIA (Agencies) — South Africa built six nuclear bombs starting in 1979 because it wanted to be able to blackmail the West into intervening if black-ruled neighbours threatened attack, arms officials said.

In a rare disclosure on the now-disbanded nuclear weapons programme, the managing director of weapons maker Armscor, Tielman De Waal, detailed the country's former nuclear strategy for foreign reporters.

Mr. De Waal conceded that the programme used technology from Israel and unnamed other countries, but said none of them wittingly supplied material to help South Africa obtain the bomb. Anti-nuclear activists have said South Africa also got key technology from the United States, Germany and France.

The uranium used was extracted locally, Mr. De Waal said, and the bombs would have been delivered by aircraft. A testing ground was set up in the Kalahari Desert, but never used.

The programme was kept in strict secrecy and less than 800 people in the country of 41 million had any knowledge of it, including politicians, military officials, scientists and workers, Mr. De Waal said.

The briefing came as the state-owned firm, which armed South Africa's military during years of sanctions against the old white minority regime, was seeking a new role by offering management expertise to President Nelson

Mandela's year-old government. South Africa took the first steps toward developing nuclear weapons in 1974, though a formal decision to build a bomb probably came only in 1979, Mr. De Waal said.

At the time, the country was losing friends due to its racial policies, and leaders feared Soviet-orchestrated attacks from Moscow allies Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Angola, Mr. De Waal said.

"At this time a deterrent strategy emerged," he explained. "The aim was the deterrent was to obtain Western assistance in the case of a serious military threat."

The strategy had three stages. The first was based on uncertainty, with South Africa neither confirming nor denying it had a nuclear arsenal.

If a serious threat arose, the United States would be secretly told of South Africa's nuclear capability and expected to help defuse the problem. Failing that, Pretoria would publicly declare it had the bomb or dramatically prove it with an underground test.

South Africa never "intentionally" moved beyond the first stage, Mr. De Waal said, though most Western governments were aware of its arsenal. None of the six bombs completed before then-President F.W. De Klerk ordered the programme stopped in 1990 was ever tested.

Mr. De Klerk broke the secrecy in 1993, announcing to parliament that the prog-

ramme existed and had been scrapped. The six finished bombs and one uncompleted — each the size of the U.S. bomb that devastated Hiroshima in World War II — were destroyed.

In a separate development, Mr. De Klerk has reportedly agreed an interim party summit to break a deadlock on Zulu autonomy that threatens to sour South Africa's national unity government.

The impasse revolves around demands by Zulu nationalist leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi for international mediation to settle disputes over the greater provincial autonomy he wants for his stronghold in KwaZulu-Natal, heartland of the country's eight million Zulus.

Mr. Buthelezi has threatened to pull his Inkatha Freedom Party out of the government, which could bring low-level clashes between his supporters and President Nelson Mandela's African National Congress in the province to a boil.

Mr. De Klerk, whose former white ruling National Party belongs to the ANC-led government along with Inkatha, urged a summit between Mr. Mandela, Mr. Buthelezi and himself, Inkatha spokesman Sipo Mzimela said Thursday. The request came to party leaders in letters Tuesday that Mr. De Klerk has refused to discuss, he said.

The National Party and ANC secured Inkatha's participation in last year's historic all-race elections only by

pledging to give international mediation another try to resolve autonomy. An earlier attempt has failed.

The ANC and National Party failed to meet Wednesday's deadline set by Inkatha to get the talks going. The party plans a meeting Saturday to discuss Mr. De Klerk's proposal, Mr. Mzimela said.

Meanwhile the ANC said the leadership of the ruling African National Congress (ANC) will not take any disciplinary steps against Winnie Mandela over her court challenge to her dismissal from her government post.

In a statement issued late Thursday, the ANC's decision-making National Working Committee (NWC) said it was not necessary to add or subtract from a statement issued by President Nelson Mandela. Mrs. Mandela's estranged husband.

A presidential statement criticised the proposed court action, saying it had little chance of success as the president was merely exercising his "constitutional prerogative to appoint and dismiss government ministers."

The statement added that Mr. Mandela believed it was "highly undesirable to engage in any public debate with (Mrs. Mandela) on matters of good government, including actions that he may take from time to time."

The ANC had issued a separate statement also condemning Mrs. Mandela, who was fired last week by the president from her post of deputy minister of arts, culture, science and technology.

Australia's favourite song turns 100

SYDNEY (AP) — Waltzing Matilda, the slang-filled ballad which has become Australia's unofficial national anthem, turns 100 and Australians plan to celebrate. The story of the hungry hobo who steals a sheep and drowns in a swampy pond rather than face arrest was sung by troops in the two world wars and can be recited by most school children. It is sung on national holidays, and even big sporting events.

"Waltzing Matilda always brings the hair up on the back of my neck," Prime Minister Paul Keating said recently. "It is part and parcel of what ever we are as Australians."

The biggest celebration to mark the centenary was held Thursday in Winton, a dusty outback town, where Waltzing Matilda was first performed at a local bar in April 1895. Waltzing Matilda was written by Banjo Paterson, Australia's most popular poet. He used colourful slang to dress up the story of the hobo, the "jolly swagman," and set the words to the tune of an old Scottish march. In the early 1900s Waltzing Matilda was adopted as an advertising jingle for a tea company and by the 1970s was nominated as an alternative national anthem at a special referendum. Despite its enduring appeal, its origins are obscure. Some historians claim that Paterson wrote the song in Winton after hearing a local story about a sheep-stealing tramp, who drowned in a water hole when trying to escape police.

Hoffman, Bacall get French arts honours

PARIS (AFP) — French Culture Minister Jacques Toubon has honoured U.S. actors Lauren Bacall and Dustin Hoffman with one of France's highest cultural honours. The widow of Humphrey Bogart, who appeared in Robert Altman's recent film *Pret a Pret*, was made a commander of the Order of Arts and Letters at a ceremony to the French capital. Hoffman, who is currently in Paris for the release of his latest film *Outbreak*, was named an officer of the Order.

Man hands out cash on buses

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand (AFP) — An unidentified man has delighted commuters in Christchurch, New Zealand by handing out cash (\$32) to passengers, according to recent reports. Christchurch Transport Limited's assistant operations manager Lloyd Rieister said he had no idea who the man was or why he was handing out the money, the Christchurch Press reported. A woman passenger said the mystery man got on her crowded, early morning bus, said "Good morning, I'm the man in the blue suit," and proceeded to hand out money. An hour earlier he was seen on another bus. Rieister said on each occasion the man used a mouthy bus pass, handed out the money to passengers and left the bus. "We're hoping it will continue. There haven't been any complaints, just inquiries about which buses to use," he said.

Most French teenagers use condoms

PARIS (R) — More than seven out of 10 French teenagers are using condoms the first time they have sex, showing that an aggressive national AIDS prevention campaign appears to be paying off, researchers reported. A survey of more than 6,000 teenagers aged 15-18 found that 79 per cent of boys and 74 per cent of girls used condoms in their first sexual relationship, the National AIDS Research Agency said. Five years ago, just 57 per cent used a condom for their first sexual liaison, the agency said, concluding that teenagers were now getting the message aimed at them in a nationwide programme to combat AIDS infection. France, with the highest rate of AIDS infection in Europe, has aggressively promoted condom use through billboard, television and print advertising campaigns as well as in a variety of educational programmes. The typical age for sexual initiation was 17 years and three months for boys and 17 years and six months for girls — surprisingly, about the same as it was 21 years ago, the survey found.

Filipino rebels flee leaving 5 dead

IPIL, Philippines (R) — Muslim rebels holding up to 50 hostages are believed to have escaped after a fierce clash Friday with Philippine troops that left five hostages dead, the military said.

At least six rebels were killed in a vicious series of firefights with troops that began early Friday morning but by afternoon government forces had lost contact with the enemy.

"They have escaped," an army officer told Reuters. The rebels are the remnants of a heavily armed force which devastated the southern Philippine town of Ipi on Mindanao Island Tuesday, killing 45 people.

The military launched its offensive at 6.30 a.m. with a force of about 500 men including scout Rangers and Special Forces troops. They were backed by mortars and helicopters firing machineguns and rockets.

There was no word on the remaining hostages who the military said are being used as "human shields."

The hostages included people taken from Ipi and villagers seized as the rebels drove deeper into the interior of Mindanao Island to escape their pursuers.

Some of the raiders are

believed to have escaped by sea.

Hundreds of villagers in the battle zone, including pregnant women and women with children, fled Friday's fighting in all directions, Reuters photographer Enrique De Castro said from the scene.

During the day the battlefront, constantly shifting through the rolling, forested terrain, brought troops and rebels within 30 metres of each other.

Mr. De Castro said they were close enough to trade both gunfire and taunts.

"You son of a bitch, you have run out of bullets — surrender," Mr. De Castro quoted one soldier as saying. "Allahu Akbar (God is great)," came the reply, accompanied by a volley of machinegun fire.

Two hostages were wounded, including Nestor Flores, who was shot as he tried to escape his captors.

"I can no longer walk. When I ran I was hit. I was pleading 'don't' but they shot me," he said, adding he wasn't sure which side shot him.

The rebels made makeshift stretchers out of their uniforms for the wounded pair and loaded them into trucks,

sending them back behind government lines.

Carlos Ingito, another hostage who escaped, said his captors told him to bury five rebel dead. "Ingito, his clothes bloodied by the corpses, said he had not completed the task when firing erupted and he fled.

"We've gotten even," a helicopter pilot returning from a rocket attack against the rebels told Reuters Television cameraman Manuel Tescon.

He said his rockets had hit "many" rebels.

The battle area was around 45 kilometres from Ipi in the district of Santo Rosario. The government says the rebels are from the feared Abu Sayyaf group which has been blamed for a series of killings and kidnappings in the past two years.

Some officials and Muslim sources say, however, that the Ipi raiders also included radical members of other Muslim rebel groups.

President Fidel Ramos, due to visit Ipi Saturday, had ordered an all-out assault on the raiders after the Ipi attack, the worst single act of violence for 20 years in a long-festering Muslim insurgency in the southern Philippines.

Malaysia poll dates draw cry of protest

KUALA LUMPUR (R) — The Malaysian Elections Commission announced Friday the dates for snap general elections — April 24 and 25 — and immediately drew howls of protest from opposition leaders.

The chosen dates are working days, which the opposition fears would affect urban turnout and leave only the legal minimum campaign time of just 10 days.

"It will definitely affect the urban votes. The government should declare public holidays for the polls," said Lim Kit Siang, leader of the opposition Democratic Action Party (DAP).

The opposition was unhappy with a short campaign period it said would give the ruling National Front coalition a definite advantage through its influence on the media.

Opposition parties get little play on the pro-government television and radio stations and in newspapers.

Public rallies are banned in Malaysia. Instead, political parties must get police permits to hold usually packed closed door "ceramahs," or meet-the-people sessions.

Announcing the poll dates after parliament and 11 of the country's 13 state assemblies were dissolved, Elections Commission Chairman Harun Din said nominations were to be made on April 15. Campaigning starts after that.

He said 192 parliamentary and 394 state seats would be at stake with voters in the Borneo states of Sabah and Sarawak having two days to cast their votes while those in the other states voting on April 25.

"We have asked for school holidays on those days to allow the schools to be used as polling centres," Mr. Harun told a news conference in Kuala Lumpur.

He said there were no plans to announce a public holiday. The Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange was also unlikely to be closed, an exchange official said.

Campaigning lasts until the eve of polling, giving both the ruling and opposition parties 10 days to woo nine million eligible voters.

Mr. Lim told Reuters the Election Commission should have set polling dates for the end of May to allow Muslim

pilgrims to vote. An estimate 20,000 Muslims go on the annual pilgrimage to Mecca. "It is regrettable that the commission did not accept our proposal to set elections for the end of May, denying Muslim pilgrims of their rights to vote," he said.

The fundamentalist Muslim Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party, known by its Malay acronym PAS, also protested against the timing.

But Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad, aiming for another landslide victory, dismissed the PAS protests, saying the National Front would be equally affected.

"Not all Muslim pilgrims are PAS supporters. I am also a pilgrim but I am not a PAS supporter," he said Wednesday after announcing the dissolution of parliament.

He said the National Front, which planned to issue its manifesto Saturday, aimed to maintain its two-thirds majority in parliament.

PAS was also scheduled to announce its manifesto Saturday evening while Mr. Lim said the DAP's manifesto, which centres on taking power in Penang state, would be released next week.



File picture dated July 17, 1994. A Rwandan refugee looks for her parents among the corpses of over 100 of her compatriots, who were trampled in the eastern Zairean border town of Goma by thousands of people fleeing the Rwandan Patriotic Front sweep in the northwest of their country. The start of the ethnic massacres erupted in Rwanda after death of the

President Juvenal Habyarimana, a Hutu on April 6, 1994. The genocide, carried out principally by extremist Rwandan soldiers and Hutu militiamen, continued until the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front captured Kigali, July 1994, and drove out the Hutu government (AFP photo)

Burundi capital tense after journalist killed

BUJUMBURA (Agencies) — Residents of Bujumbura tensed for revenge killings Friday after gunmen believed to be Hutus killed a South African journalist, his driver and his interpreter, and troops of the Tutsi-dominated army exchanged fire with attackers in a city suburb.

The gunmen attacked the car carrying Vincent Francis, Johannesburg bureau chief for British-based Worldwide Television News (WTN), in broad daylight late Thursday afternoon 12 kilometres from the capital as he was returning from investigating reports of massacres upcountry.

An AFP photographer who visited the morgue said Francis's head was riddled with bullets, and soldiers at the scene said the attackers poured fire into the car from close range, then stole everything in it. The soldiers described the attackers as Hutus.

Francis's interpreter, Burundian student, was also killed instantly, and the driver died in hospital Friday. WTN cameraman Victor Dhlamini — the sole survivor — was being flown out to Nairobi Friday after being shot in the left leg and three

fingers of the right hand. Doctors said the cameraman, also a South African, was not in danger of dying.

(In Pretoria, South African Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo expressed regret and sadness at the killings and said the South African government stood ready to provide any help needed.)

Both the Burundians killed came from the Tutsi extremist stronghold of Ngagara in northern Bujumbura, raising fears of revenge attacks against Hutus.

An army spokesman meanwhile said gunmen — presumably Hutus — attacked a military at the entrance to the south Bujumbura Tutsi neighbourhood of Musaga overnight.

He dismissed the attack as a small one, with no army casualties, but residents said the two sides exchanged intense fire for 20 minutes. Burundi is already experiencing low-level civil war between the Hutus, who represent 85 per cent of the population, and the Tutsis, who make up only 14 per cent but represent almost the entire forces in the army and the paramilitary gendarmes.

A year ago — on April 6, 1994 — Presidents Juvenal Habyarimana of Rwanda and Cyprien Ntaryamira of Burundi, both Hutus, were killed when their plane was brought down by rockets over Kigali.

That attack, still unclaimed, unleashed civil war in Rwanda which led to more than half a million deaths and destabilised this neighbouring country.

For Burundi, it was the second murder of a Hutu president. The first, Melchior Ndadaye, was assassinated during a failed putsch by the army in October 1993 which led to clashes between the tribes in which up to 50,000 Burundians died.

Rwandans gathered Friday to rebury their late prime minister and 200 others a year after the start of genocidal killings in which up to one million people perished.

People moved at dawn to a stadium at Nyamirambo, a suburb on a hill outside the capital, from where the funeral procession was due to begin. Kigali's streets were otherwise deserted as many Rwandans stayed indoors. At noon the nation, led by President Pasteur Bizimungu

and guests Julius Nyerere, the former president of Tanzania, and Burundi Prime Minister Antoine Nduwayo, observed a minute's silence to remember Tutsi and Hutu victims of the slaughter.

Agathe Uwilingiyimana, the moderate Hutu prime minister, was seized by Hutu presidential guards minutes after President Habyarimana was killed in a rocket attack on his plane in the night of April 6 last year.

Ms. Uwilingiyimana, who was five months pregnant, was disembowelled and the worst bloodbath in the troubled history of Africa began. Many of the killings took place hidden the world since most U.N. peacekeepers and diplomats were evacuated after the murder of 10 Belgian soldiers in Ms. Uwilingiyimana's guard.

Ms. Uwilingiyimana and the others will be buried at Rebero Hill a few kilometres away from Nyamirambo. On Thursday, the first seven of up to 30,000 jailed suspects appeared in a Kigali court to answer charges they took part in the mass killings in the three months after April 6 last year.

Serbs close all checkpoints around Sarajevo

Bosnian Serbs regain ground

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — Bosnian Serb forces have regained ground against Muslim-led government troops in a successful counter-attack in northeast Bosnia near a disputed communications tower, government army sources said Friday.

Serb forces, retaliating against Bosnian army offensives launched last month, continued to shell civilian targets in Sarajevo, flouting a U.N. ban on heavy weapons around the city.

One person was killed and several others wounded when a rocket slammed into several houses in the government-held suburb of Hrasnica Friday morning, a local hospital reported.

Outside Sarajevo French peacekeepers and Bosnian Serb soldiers were engaged in a tense standoff after both sides moved extra troops into position at a contested checkpoint, U.N. officials said.

The French deployed a full platoon of soldiers and four armoured personnel carriers to the airport road checkpoint this morning, said Alexander Ivanko, a U.N. spokesman in Sarajevo.

Serb forces threatened to destroy the French armoured vehicles if they were not removed by 9 a.m. (0700 GMT), but the deadline passed without incident.

On Thursday evening Serb infantry backed by heavy artillery launched a coordinated assault on two hills near the Stolic relay station east of Tuzla, and captured both objectives, Bosnian army sources told Reuters in Tuzla.

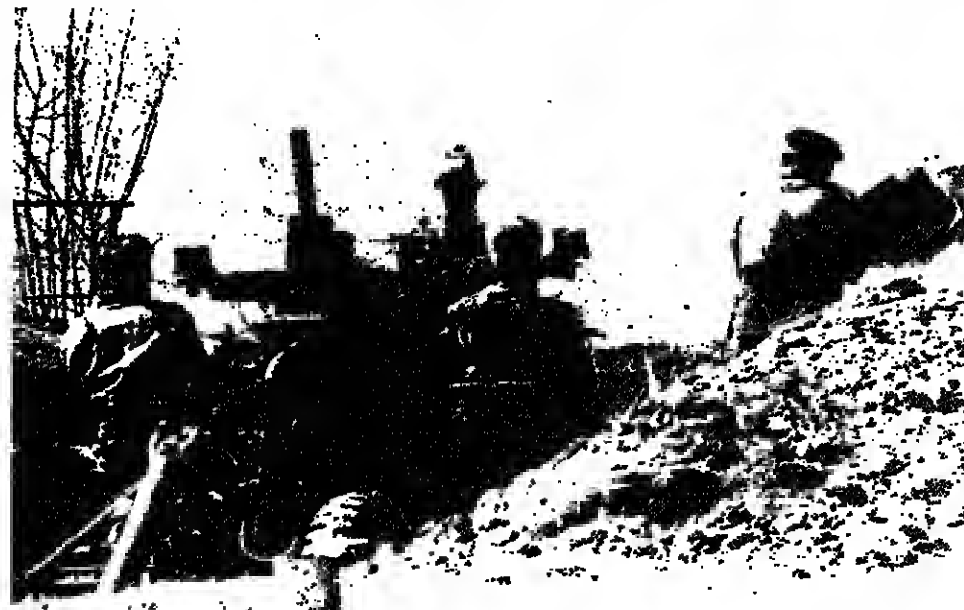
The government sources reported Serb helicopters ferrying men and ammunition into the battlezone in the Majevica Hills.

Bosnian army units launched an offensive in the Stolic area on March 20 and seized at least 50 square kilometres of territory, but not the communications tower which was their main target.

Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic had vowed to retaliate and crush government forces around Stolic and across Bosnia, Thursday saw the first significant sign of that effort.

The Bosnian Serb News Agency (SRNA) said Friday Serb forces had stifled the government army offensive around Stolic.

"Serb troops deblocked the Stolic relay station Thursday night, dealing a final blow to the Muslim offensive,"



Bosnian Serb gunners fire their 37mm 'Bofors' the small village of Ripac, four kilometres anti-aircraft cannon on the front line close to southeast of Bihac (AFP photo)

sive on the Majevica front," SRNA cited Bosnian Serb army sources as saying.

U.N. peacekeepers, whose movement was severely restricted by the combatants, could not confirm whether Serbs had captured ground but reported heavy shelling in the Majevica Hills.

"Fighting and heavy shelling continued in the Stolic Tower and southern Majevica Hills areas where over 1,000 detonations were reported," Major Hervé Gourmelon told reporters in Sarajevo.

The Stolic relay station controls telephone and television links in the north of the country and Bosnian army officers had hoped to capture it intact.

Fighting has intensified in recent weeks despite a four-month ceasefire scheduled to expire at the end of April.

U.N. efforts to extend the crumbling ceasefire pact have so far failed to produce any progress, with United Nations officials warning the republic is sliding towards all-out war.

The Bosnian government army was battling a 'Serb assault' in the northwest Bihac pocket, with Serb forces from Croatia and allied rebel Muslims staging an attack near Velika Kladusa, Maj. Gourmelon said.

The offensive appeared to involve 500 to 600 troops supported with artillery, mortar and armoured vehicles, he said. "It seems to have succeeded in capturing some high ground but there has

been no shift in the confrontation line."

In Bihac seven civilians were wounded in Serb shelling of the town Thursday, the U.N. said.

But Mr. Ivanko blamed the Bosnian 5th Army Corps, responsible for the defence of the northwest enclave, for launching an attack out of the safe area, action which he said prompted Serb retaliation.

Some 400 Bosnian soldiers assisted by Bosnian Croat HVO forces attacked out of the south of the safe area, capturing a road, Mr. Ivanko said.

The U.N. had earlier warned it could not protect "safe areas" if government forces used them as staging ground from which to launch offensive actions.

On Friday, U.N. force commander in the former Yugoslavia, General Bernard Janvier, flew to Corrali, in the Bihac enclave by helicopter.

But because he refused to land in Serb-held territory prior to flying into the besieged pocket, the Serbs said they would fire at all U.N. helicopters in the area, UNPROFOR spokesman Yuri Shishayev reported here.

Bosnian Serb forces Friday closed off all their checkpoints around Sarajevo and laid mines on a road linking the besieged city to the airport, U.N. Protection Force spokesman Yuri Shishayev said.

The action followed the tense confrontation Friday

morning at the Serb "Sierra 4" checkpoint on the road leading to the airport between the French U.N. soldiers and the Serbs.

A meeting of the self-proclaimed Bosnian Serb "parliament" to discuss a federation of Bosnian and Croatian Serbs was postponed by two days, SRNA said Friday.

The "parliament" session due for April 2 at Sanski Most in northwest Bosnia, will not now be held until April 14 and 15, the agency said, without giving a reason for the delay.

The meeting is due to discuss advanced plans for a federation between the so-called "Serb Republic" and the breakaway Serb-held Krajina region of Croatia.

Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic has already signed an agreement with Croatian Serb leader Milan Martić in February paving the way for the creation of a common defence council, as a first step in closer links between the two zones.

A Bosnian Serb leader was quoted Thursday as warning Belgrade would unleash a civil war among Serbs in former Yugoslavia if it agreed to recognise Bosnia and Croatia.

"I do not even dare think of such a possibility," said Nikola Koljevic, "vice-president" of the self-declared Bosnian Serb Republic.

"It would lead to a further split in the Serb people, which could lead only to a Serbian civil war," the Fonet Agency quoted him as saying.

9 candidates qualify for French presidency poll

PARIS (R) — Nine candidates qualified Friday to contest France's presidential election as the three main contenders sought to lure the key floating voters of women and young people in an increasingly tight race.

Latest opinion poll suggest that conservative frontrunner Jacques Chirac's lead has narrowed while fellow Gaullist rival Prime Minister Edouard Balladur and Socialist candidate Lionel Jospin are neck-and-neck in the race for second place.

The electorate remains highly volatile, with up to 40 per cent of voters undecided ahead of the April 23 first round.

A Louis Harris poll in the daily Information gave Mr. Chirac 25 per cent, Mr. Jospin 21 and Mr. Balladur 18. But an IPSOS survey for the magazine Le Point gave a conflicting picture with Mr. Chirac down to 23 per cent, Mr. Balladur on 21 and Mr. Jospin on 19.

Both polls suggested Mr. Chirac would comfortably beat either opponent in the May 7 run-off.

The list of candidates whose nomination was validated by the Constitutional Council, published by the official journal Friday, contained only one surprise.

Maverick far-rightist Jacques Cheminade, a virtual unknown, made it on to the ballot alongside Mr. Chirac, Mr. Balladur, Mr. Jospin, extreme-right leader Jean-Marie Le Pen, anti-austrian rightist Philippe de Villiers, Communist Robert Hue, Trotskyite Jeanne Laguerre and ecologist Dominique Voynet.

Mr. Cheminade, 53, a sport of American far-rightist Lynond Larouche, managed to gather the endorsement that forced several lesser-known minor candidates out of the race.

A graduate of France's Civil Service College (VA) like four of the other candidates, Mr. Cheminade a former economics officer, says he now lives off mail legacy.

Following his sudden start, he rushed from radio to television studios day, proclaiming a jum-



French Prime Minister and presidential candidate Edouard Balladur (left) speaks with Defence Minister Francois Leotard during their flight to Corsica on his way to a political

meeting. Mr. Balladur has pulled into second place just two points behind rightwing rival Jacques Chirac in the race for the French presidency in new poll (AFP photo)

bled dogma blaming "financial cancer" for the world's ills and vowing to fight "uniform and iniquitous thinking that dominates the elite and shapes mainstream ideology."

All three major candidates were due to put their proposals for greater equality between the sexes to the National Council of Women Friday.

Mr. Balladur, the first to speak, acknowledged that France was behind its European partners on sex equality and pledged to work for equal pay and greater political representation for women.

Mr. Jospin, battling to reach the run-off, pleaded with young people Thursday night not to waste votes on fringe candidates or be taken in by Mr. Chirac's "demagogic" promises.

Cheered by thousands of youthful supporters at a rally in the southern city of Montpellier, he declared: "I defend the values that young people stand for."

Mr. Chirac, the favourite among first-time voters according to opinion polls, plans a giant youth rally Sunday in Paris.

In this last major television interview before strict rules

cut broadcasting by the candidates, Mr. Chirac rejected his rivals' charges of demagoguery, saying he had made few promises.

The Paris mayor, who has failed in two previous presidential bids, declined to be drawn on who he would appoint to government, stressing the election was still wide open.

"If you were to tell me that the game is not over, I would agree, because this is clear," Mr. Chirac told France-2 television.

Meanwhile, British gamblers, used to a prime minister with a reputation for being boring, are putting their money on Edouard Balladur to win France's presidential election.

The bookmaker Ladbrokes said Wednesday that punters were not exactly clamouring to lay bets on the outcome of the two-round vote — it has taken total stakes of less than £10,000 since it opened its books 10 days ago.

But despite opinion polls showing Mr. Chirac in the lead, most bets are being laid on his fellow Conservative, Prime Minister Balladur.

"The early money in our betting has been for Balladur," said Ladbrokes spokesman Paul Austin.

"But we're still keeping Chirac the favourite."

Ladbrokes is giving odds of 1-3 for Chirac and 2-1 for Mr. Balladur. Socialist Lionel Jospin, although neck and neck with Mr. Balladur in opinion polls, is a distant 25-1.

Rival William Hill, another British bookmaker, puts Mr. Chirac at 1-2, Mr. Balladur at 6-4 and Mr. Jospin at 6-1.

Wagers on politics are unheard of in France — legal betting is carried out by state companies on horse racing and lotteries.

Mr. Austin said he expected betting interest to build up ahead of the April 23 first round of voting and May 7 second round.

"People are bidding their time until nearer the election," he said. "I think there will be lots of twists and turns to come."

On the 1988 presidential election Ladbrokes took over £100,000 (£160,000) in bets. This time, it expects around £250,000 (£400,000).

On current takings, bets on Mr. Jospin look unlikely to make a significant contribution. "I don't know of a bet above £10 (on Jospin)," Mr. Austin said.

Russia offers safe conduct to Chechen refugees

KHAJI YURT, Russia (AFP) — The Russian military sent envoys into Chechen mountain villages Friday to coax refugees to return home, and warn rebels that the villages would be bombed if they did not lay down their arms.

Thousands of refugees have abandoned their homes in recent weeks and fled to the mountains in southern Chechnya as Russian forces gradually won control of the country's main cities, towns and lowland villages.

On Friday the Russian military command sent messengers of the pro-Russian Chechen opposition to the mountain villages with the message to refugees: Come home now and you will not be harmed.

At the same time, it issued an ultimatum, warning that the Russians would launch an intense bombing and artillery offensive against the villages unless the rebels laid down their arms by Sunday.

Already Friday, Russian planes were flying over the mountains in a cloudless sky, possibly preparing for a post-weekend blitz.

Chechen fighters loyal to secessionist President Dzhokhar Dudayev were driven out of their urban strongholds over the last few weeks and have pledged to launch a new partisan war from the mountains.

The Russians are clearly hoping to end rebel resistance before world leaders including U.S. President Bill Clinton converge on Moscow on May 9 for VE-Day celebration to mark the end of World War II in Europe.

The Russian military offensive to crush Chechnya's three-year secession from Moscow, which began on Dec. 11, has been widely condemned.

The latest Russian "come home" appeal to the refugees appeared aimed at restoring a semblance of normal life to

some towns, and to avoid massive civilian casualties should the threatened attacks on mountain villages materialise.

The Russians are particularly eager to get refugees back to the eastern Chechnya towns of Shali and Gudermes, which were abandoned by the rebels late last month without being flattened by Russian bombs and artillery.

By contrast, other towns such as the capital, Grozny, were devastated by Russian shelling before they were captured by the rebels, and are hardly livable.

The commander of Russian forces in Shali sent a message to the mountain refugees saying that a safe corridor back to the town would be opened to them Friday.

One of the pro-Russian Chechen envoys, Andi Baisultanov, approached several families in Khaji Yurt, 20 kilometres (12 miles) southeast of Shali at

the foothills of the mountains, with the message: "You've got to get out of here."

"The Russians are going to bomb you. There's nothing you can do. There is nowhere for you to hide. Why let your wives and children be killed when you can go back to Shali where everything is back to normal?" he said.

Mr. Baisultanov told one family that their house was still intact, and another that their relatives had already returned home.

His big selling point was that the new police and security chiefs in Shali were to be trusted, since they were local men known by everyone, even if they had always been solid members of the anti-rebel opposition.

The news spread like wildfire through the refugee-swollen village, where three or four large families are packed into each small house.

U.N. conference agrees deal to protect climate

BERLIN (R) — The United Nations Friday approved by consensus a deal setting up a procedure to reduce emissions of climate-altering gases into the next century, but it set no specific targets.

"I declare the document adopted," conference President Angela Merkel told delegates to the U.N. climate meeting who greeted the draft with applause. Some 170 states participated in the conference.

The document set up a two-year negotiating process to elaborate policies and measures and set "quantified limitation and reduction objectives within specified timeframes" for emissions of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide (CO2).

But the mandate for these talks did not specify how large these reductions should be, or when they should be achieved.

"The deal represented a compromise between the European Union and developing countries — which had wanted clear-cut reduction targets — and leading CO2 producers such as the United States, Japan and Australia which had wanted looser formulations."

Danish Environment Minister Svend Auken told Reuters the deal was "better than we would have expected."

He said the deal introduced "a process leading to the setting of new targets with specific timetables" and "underlining the commitments of developing countries."

But the countries of the alliance of small island states were deeply disappointed with the result. Many tiny low-lying island states could be washed off the

map if the worst climate change scenarios come true and sea levels rise dramatically.

"Let us not be self-congratulatory since we have achieved so little by this action, or lack of it," a delegate from the Marshall Islands told the plenary meeting on the final day of the 11-day, \$16-million conference.

The final resolution fulfilled a key demand of the developing countries that it should introduce no new commitments for them beside those introduced at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit.

The Berlin conference was a follow-on to the Rio meeting, which set goals for CO2 reductions only up to the year 2000.

The resolution said the negotiating group which will now try to set targets and a timeframe for CO2 cuts should complete its work as

early as possible in 1997. The results could then be formally adopted at a follow-up to the Berlin conference.

There were strong reservations to the deal from the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries, which fear a loss of revenues if emissions reductions prompt lower oil consumption.

Nevertheless these countries, led by Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, did not make use of their right to block the final deal as advocates of emissions cuts had feared.

Environmentalists were angry that the deal did not name specific emissions targets, but found some grounds for optimism.

"This is far from a disaster as far as the mandate for negotiations goes, it gives clear ground rules for them to go ahead," said leading Greenpeace official Jeremy Leggett.

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Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation
Established 1975
جريدة الجordanية السياسية المستقلة المنشورة بالانجليزية في الاردن

Chairman of the Board of Directors:

MAHMOUD AL KAYED

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Jordan Press Foundation,

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Telephones: 667171/6, 670141-4

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Facsimile: 696183

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the
Jordan Times advertising department.

Race in space

IT MAY not be such a big deal that Israel has sent a spy satellite into outer space to hover over several Arab capitals. Israel has been known to gather military intelligence from many Western satellites orbiting the Earth. What is so striking about this new development is the lack of an Arab countereffort to keep tabs on Israeli military intentions.

Israel is known to have several nuclear devices and the means to deliver them. The Arab side has nothing of the sort. It would make sense therefore to conclude that the Arab capitals have a lot more to be concerned about than Israel does. The Jewish state cannot continue to enjoy a monopoly over mass destruction weapons, top it all with the launching of Ofek-3 satellite and remain indifferent to Arab concerns about their own safety. It is also not a big relief that the orbit of Ofek-3 will take it over only Damascus and Baghdad. The Arabs of the region would never sense security and stability as long as parts of the homeland are under one-sided surveillance.

We may understand the Israeli decision to send its satellite as part of its preparedness for an eventual peace deal with Syria. Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has always voiced concern about the military implications of any eventual Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights and how much his country needs precautionary and warning means to forestall any possible Syrian incursion into its heartland. What we cannot understand, though, is the apparent lack of appreciation for the Arabs' own anxieties especially at a time when Israel is known to possess nuclear bombs and their means of delivery. The concerned Arab capitals therefore must strive to have their own spy satellite in order to balance out the disequilibrium that would result from having only the Arab World under surveillance.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i on Friday dealt with the exchange of accusations between the Palestine National Authority (PNA) and the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, about last Sunday's explosion in Gaza which left eight people dead, saying Hamas has announced that it will avenge the incident which it claimed was concocted jointly by the PNA and Israel. Mohammad Kharoub said, there was an escalation in media campaigns by the PNA and asked if there would be a confrontation between the PNA and Hamas. He ruled out the possibility of having Hamas risking a military confrontation or even a sharp media exchange with the PNA. He said Hamas realises the balance of power in the Gaza Strip, especially after the incident which occurred at a Gaza mosque on Nov. 18, and in which several were killed by PNA police. He said after the incident, Hamas preferred the language of dialogue and tolerance rather than violence and assassinations. The problem then was overcome after the PNA took a step back and opened an investigation of the incident. He added, Mr. Kharoub said Israel was dealing with the issue carefully and denying any responsibility for the incident. The writer said although the situation in Gaza was tense, he expressed his belief that reason will eventually triumph because both sides know that any escalation in the situation will lead to a civil war.

A COLUMNIST in Al Dustour, Saleh Al Qallab, on Monday blamed Wednesday's violence at the University of Jordan, in which some 20 students were injured, on what he termed as the distorted and erroneous values that still prevail in Jordanian society, saying that these values are nurtured by government officials. He said it was not weird to have disputes between university students, noting that such disputes happen in all universities. He said incidents elsewhere in the world happen because of political reasons but the one at the university was tribally motivated. The writer said that it does not matter who is to blame in the incident, saying the blame will eventually fall on the educational patterns Jordanians are exposed to since their birth. He said the problem was that the Jordanian society did not yet develop from a tribal society to a civil one. That is why the oldest and most important university in the country was turned into an arena of tribal brawls and fights, he said.

Jordanian Perspective

By Dr. Musa Keilani

Cooperation — not competition — should mark peace-building process

BUILDING PEACE was the key theme in the series of multilateral meetings that Jordan hosted last week and these meetings appeared to have produced some progress towards the objective of translating peace into tangible benefits in the life of people.

In technical terms, the gatherings in Amman and Aqaba were part of the run-up to the economic summit that the Jordanian capital will host in October, an event that many experts describe as the best opportunity yet for Jordan to advance its quest for foreign capital and development projects.

These meetings included the workshop of the Jordanian-Israeli-American commission and deliberations among Jordanian, Israeli, Egyptian and American delegates in Aqaba and bilateral Jordanian-Israeli meetings. In sum, the central focus of all meetings was how to deal with the requirements of the era of peace and what every player, from the region and otherwise, could do to advance the quest for best and efficient means to raise funds and channel those funds to the most rewarding projects.

Having said that, however, the fact remains that the outcome of the one-day meeting of the task force on setting up a Middle East development bank was not very encouraging if only because of the key difference across the Atlantic on whether the proposed bank should have its own capital.

The resistance put up by some members of the European Union (EU) to the idea of the proposed bank having its own capital contrasted strongly against the campaign launched by the four core parties in the Middle East — Jordan, Israel, Egypt and the Palestinians.

The European stand that such a bank need not have a capital of its own was rooted in the argument that existing financing institutions — the various European Union agencies, the World Bank, the International Financing Corporation etc. etc. in addition to institutions run independently by various European governments — were sufficient to take care of financing the economic development of the Middle East and North Africa.

On the surface, the argument makes sense. Given the record of bureaucracy in the Middle East and some of the European Union institutions themselves, the idea of having another multilateral institution financed by bodies and governments with conflicting agendas does not sound very good. There is also the consideration that running a commercially viable bank with multilateral interests is not

an easy task either.

But the overriding factor that is of high concern to us in Jordan is of a different nature: For one thing, we are all aware that global preoccupations are shifting rapidly around with the emerging new world order, and, as such, there is no guarantee that the present international interest in the Middle East and North Africa is long lasting. In that vein of thought, how are we assured that European interest in seeing it through that the Middle East and North Africa are helped to develop themselves? Will there be the same interest and approach in the year 1997? In 1999? Or thereafter?

We appreciate the European Union's switch of focus from Eastern Europe to the Mediterranean. But, with all due respect to the powerful trading bloc, can we ask what is there to stop it from shifting attention from the Mediterranean to somewhere else just as they did with Eastern Europe?

We do acknowledge that the European Union is proposing up to \$6 billion in the next four years to be spent in the Mediterranean region. But for us in the immediate region, the amount becomes insignificant, given that dozens of countries from Morocco to Turkey would be vying for their shares from the fund and there is no hard and fast mechanism to ensure a fair distribution.

Ideally, what we would like to see is an institution with its own capital and independent structure devoted to developing the economy of the Middle East and North Africa in the same spirit as called for by the Casablanca declaration.

No doubt, part of the resistance by some European countries to the proposal of having such an institution seems to stem from a political preoccupation to counter what they see as an American effort to dominate the proposed institution. We are also aware that the European Union does not have a common position on the issue either, as was evident in the speeches and indirect policy presentations made by the participants in last week's meeting in Amman.

We don't think that any party concerned needs any reminder that we in the Middle East have lived through many decades of misery and suffering mostly because of international power politics. We can do without a repetition of the East-West conflict played this time around pitting Europe and the U.S. against each other.

LETTERS

'Irrefutable facts

To the Editor:

IN VIEW of the zeal displayed in certain press commentaries — including the ones that appeared or were reproduced in the Jordan Times — that misunderstand or misrepresent the Turkish military operation against PKK terrorism in northern Iraq, I wish to make the following points:

1. To describe the Turkish military operation as "an illegal action of invading a foreign country (Iraq) and creating havoc in an area declared as a U.N. safe haven" is devoid of any conceivable moral or legal ground: (A) It is common knowledge that Turkey is genuinely sensitive about the preservation of the territorial integrity of Iraq. (B) It is equally well-known that the Baghdad government is, at present, not in the position to exercise its sovereignty in northern Iraq. The lack of state authority and the chaotic situation prevailing in that area were taken advantage of by the PKK to gradually transform it into a vast and strategically convenient base for the furtherance of its separatist objectives against Turkey, through terrorism and related propaganda initiatives. (C) It was clearly ascertained that the terrorist organisation was gearing itself to launch a massive offensive against "targets" within Turkey from its bases in northern Iraq.

In light of these irrefutable facts, unbiased observers will grant that the current operation by Turkish security forces is no more and no less than a proportionate exercise of the right of self-defence by the Turkish government, which could not possibly have hesitated in the discharge of its duties with respect to the security of its people and the country's territorial integrity.

The Turkish military operation is very clear in its objectives. They are: (1) To destroy the PKK command and control elements and infrastructure in northern Iraq;

(2) To prevent the PKK from establishing a so-called "liberated zone" in the region; (3) To end cross-border infiltration into Turkey.

As it was announced at the outset, the operation is limited in both duration and scope. It is not intended, as I stressed earlier, to infringe on Iraq's territorial integrity, nor is it aimed at anyone other than the PKK. Turkish forces will be withdrawn as soon as the objectives cited above are attained.

Obviously, in order to prevent the reestablishment of PKK camps in the area and future infiltration into Turkey of terrorist bands, a secure environment needs to be established. In the final analysis, the ideal solution would be a return to normalcy in the region through the full implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 688.

Shouldn't a minimum sense of intellectual fairness have induced those who hastened to criticise Turkey so harshly — oblivious to its legitimate concerns and also making irrelevant comparisons — ask themselves how they would expect any self-respecting government to act under similar circumstances?

2. The record must also be set straight in the face of attempts whether out of ignorance or nonchalance, or by inimical design to introduce the PKK as representative of the aspirations of the Kurdish-speaking citizens of Turkey. Clearly, Turkey — like all others — is an imperfect society. All citizens of Turkey — not only those whose mother tongue is Kurdish — wish to see their country's democratic standards improved further. They all expect their government and other democratic institutions to address resolutely and imaginatively the country's domestic problems which affect their daily lives. Nevertheless, except an insignificant minority, they all recognise that their grievances are still remote dreams for most other nations in the vicinity. Furthermore, the overwhelming majority of the Kurdish speaking people of Turkey are fully aware that the PKK is, in essence, a tool in the hands of others whose traditional objectives include the destabilisation and eventual dismemberment of Turkey. They do not want to contribute to systematic efforts aimed at the destruction of their country but to continue to actively participate in its betterment. They — like other segments of the Turkish society — value their country's pluralistic democratic regime and want to further improve it. They are wise and mature enough not to be fooled by propaganda efforts designed to inculcate separatist seeds in their hearts and minds. They know full-well that the enemies of their country cannot be their friends. They have enough sense of history to grasp that the PKK has no worthwhile future to promise them. These are some of the reasons why the PKK and those who are behind it have failed in their persistent provocations to create rifts in the rich social fabric of Turkey along ethnic lines or otherwise. Those who need further evidence that the PKK is in no way representative of the Kurdish speaking population of Turkey may wish to remember that most of the civilian victims of PKK massacres (thousands since 1984) are from among the same group who, in its vast majority, refuses to support the organisation.

What is not less important is that the quasi-entirety of the Turkish people — regardless of their ethnic origins and political affiliations — also realise that circumstances created by PKK terrorism and the effective counter-measures that it necessitates adversely affect the government's efforts to address the social, economic and cultural issues on Turkey's agenda. And, this is one of the very important reasons why the resolve of the Turkish government to break the back of PKK terrorism enjoys the firm support of the people.

Turkey has sufficient self-confidence and will-power to raise with determination to the massive and sophisticated terrorist challenge directed at its very existence and the well-being of its people. We look to our friends for support in this legitimate undertaking.

I trust these clarifications will be found useful by those who are sincere in their wish to understand better the facts surrounding Turkey's struggle against the deadliest terrorist organisation of our times and the compelling reasons behind the Turkish military operation against PKK bases in northern Iraq. It would be worthwhile to note, in this context, that the most recent "achievement" of the PKK was the assassination, (April 5) near Dohuk, of three personnel of the Turkish Red Crescent convoy carrying humanitarian relief aid to the civilian population of northern Iraq and of four Iraqi Kurdish guards provided by the regional authorities to ensure the safety of the convoy. As for those who may have their own reasons to refuse to comprehend the true nature of developments, they might at least display the intellectual integrity not to envelop their Turkey-bashing with lofty values and fundamental norms of civilised conduct, which are in stark contrast with the PKK and everything that it represents.

Mehmet Ali Irtenglik
Ambassador of Turkey,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

M. KAHIL



Writers take government to task over alleged undemocratic practices

By Sa'eda Kilani

COLUMNISTS LAST week lashed at the executive authority, accusing it of various malpractices. While some writers put the blame of the alleged lack of democratic practices in the country on the incoherent structure of the government, others attributed it to various socio-cultural and historical elements.

Al Dustour newspaper columnist Taher Al Adwan criticised what he described unnecessary expenses of ministers and deputies. The travel expenses of ministers and senior government officials should be curtailed, he suggested.

What is noteworthy, he said, is the phenomenon of continuous travels of parliamentarian delegations. Parliament has been transferred into a foreign ministry, he added. Before democracy, the deputy's per diems for travel abroad were only JD 25; parliamentarians, and not the people, were the ones who have enormously benefited from the introduction of democracy in Jordan, he said.

Mr. Adwan said that most countries of the world, and rich countries in particular, are now cutting down on their travel expenses. Some Scandinavian countries, he pointed out, have cancelled the trips of their officials and envoys abroad.

Saleh Qallab, also in Al Dustour, said society suffered from major problems due to the appointment of the wrong people in wrong places. In a column entitled

an "award for failure", Mr. Qallab criticised the manner in which people get appointed to senior posts and proposed an award be presented to those who admit they failed. Failure is in itself a major achievement, he said. Those who failed should be equally honoured as successful and creative people because, he said, they would rid the society of a major vice.

He regretted that many people assume positions they don't deserve. He said "wasta", or using connections, played a major role in the appointment of people to senior jobs or to ordinary ones.

These people, he said, deserve an award for failure but only if they admit they failed.

In the weekly Shihan newspaper, Sultan Hattab (also a daily columnist at Al Ra'i paper), called on the government to lift the embargo on the Jordanian press, in reference to the suspension of the two weeklies Hawadeth Al Sa'ah and Al Bilad last February.

In an article entitled "the dirty linen that was not hung", Mr. Hattab called on the Minister of Information, Khaled Al Karaki, to stop what he described as harassing writers, journalists and intellectuals and to stop interfering in their writings and their publications through direct and indirect means.

Mr. Hattab alleged Dr. Karaki has been using his position to sack journalists whose line of thinking do

not fall in line with the minister's policies and political objectives. He said the two former governments that were formed by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker enjoyed a distinguished reputation and were fully appreciated by journalists and writers, but this government has excluded journalists, he added, thanks to Dr. Karaki.

We were shocked to see that Dr. Karaki has strayed from our rows. We had placed our hopes in him and we considered him the best of intellectuals, Mr. Hattab said.

In Al Ra'i newspaper,

THE WEEK IN PRINT

Tareq Masarweh said the accusations against a minister who has allegedly had an affair should be referred to court. He said the reputation of a minister and a respected lady should not be infringed upon neither they be bait for rumours.

We might not know all the details, Mr. Masarweh said, and these details might not be important after all. The important thing, he added, is that we should refer our cases to court to look into the dereliction cases that are hitting the Jordanian society and its institutions.

In the weekly Al Majd newspaper, Fahd Rimawi also lashed out at the government, accusing it of launching aggressive campaigns at the interior front while promoting democratic and peace slogans abroad.

Mr. Rimawi said the government has manipulated

the composition of Parliament, through the one-person one-vote law, has spoiled the political parties through infiltrating them.

At present, it is now scheming in the various martial and "legal" means against the professional associations and trade unions, he said.

In the weekly Islamist Al Sabeel, Bassam Amoush, a member of the Lower House of Parliament, heavily criticised the government's overall structure and its performance in general. He said the current crisis the government is passing through is basically due to the deformed formation of the cabinet itself. He said there were several influential blocs that are in constant struggle against each other and are influencing the government's performance.

The crisis is not only hitting the cabinet from outside, he said. It has its serious implications on the interior front too, said Dr. Amoush. He cited four ministries as having major clashes with the public and blamed the government's policies for this. He said such a government should pack and leave since it is not qualified to deal with Jordanian citizens in a dignified manner. Political parties and all others should raise their voices high and demand a government that would enjoy respect and appreciation.

This new government, he added, should include a lesser number of ministers and should have a national programme that would protect us of possible dangers at this stage.

Kurdish rebels kill 8 in northern Iraq

ANKARA (Agencies) — Kurdish rebels from Turkey opened rocket fire on a taxi and killed eight local Kurds in northern Iraq, it was reported Friday.

The attack occurred Thursday evening near the town of Zakho, said Necip Calin, a local Iraqi Kurdish security chief.

There appeared to be no direct connection to Turkey's incursion into northern Iraq intended to wipe out bases used by rebels fighting for autonomy in southeastern Turkey. The area is controlled by Iraqi Kurds and beyond the reach of the Iraqi military since the Gulf war.

The victims of the rocket attack included four children and one woman, Mr. Calin said.

Mr. Calin, a member of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), said the attack was organised by a Turkish Kurdish rebel who was collaborating with the rival Iraqi Kurdish group Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK).

The KDP and the PUK have been engaged in a power struggle for the past year.

Some 35,000 Turkish troops moved inside northern Iraq on March 20, and Ankara has come under increasing pressure from its Western allies to pull them out.

In Ankara, a government spokesman said Turkey will end its military offensive in northern Iraq within weeks. It is the first time Turkey has given a time-scale for the incursion launched on March 20.

"We will pull out our troops as soon as the opera-

tion achieves its goal, and that will not be more than weeks," said spokesman Yildirim Aktuna after a cabinet meeting.

Mr. Aktuna said the operation had four aims: To destroy bases of the separatist Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), to impose some form of control on the border region, to prevent Turkish Kurds crossing the border into Turkey and to "show the world how determined Turkey is to wipe out terrorism."

In Paris, Turkish Foreign Affairs Minister Erdal Inonu assured France that Ankara's incursion into Iraq was not open-ended, but said troops would stay until their mission was completed.

"All of our friends understand that the military operation against the PKK is an operation of limited duration, of limited goals," Mr. Inonu said.

"We have no intention of remaining in Iraq, we have no intention of setting up a 'cordon sanitaire' (protective line) or anything like that," Mr. Inonu told reporters.

The Turkish minister was in Paris to soothe French officials ahead of this weekend's 11-nation Mediterranean forum in the Riviera resort town of Saint-Maxime.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said Thursday that Washington's support for the offensive depended on moves by Turkey to limit the scope of the military operation.

In Geneva, the United Nations' top human rights officials said he was appalled by the situation in northern Iraq.

King hold talks in Ottawa

(Continued from page 1)

are a leader of great moral stature in the quest for an honourable and just peace and a betterment of your people.

"Your Majesty, we share your vision of a Middle East free from the scourge of war. We strongly support the peace process. We recognise that much work remains to be done to ensure that others follow Jordan's example and that we ultimately reach a peace among states, and more importantly between peoples."

"For some 40 years, young Canadians have been called on again and again to place themselves between hostile forces in the region and as peacekeepers or peace monitors."

"The parliament of Canada considers peacekeeping so important that it has made it a top priority of the Canadian armed forces. And at the same time Canada continues to play an active role in multilateral peace efforts."

"We lead the refugee working group, have taken the initiative with confidence building measures within the arms control group. We are offering our experts and resources for the water committee. We remain determined to make the peace process work. But peace cannot be built in one day. We are convinced that the states of the region must work together to build on a solid foundation of democratisation that leaders of vision like you Your Majesty have carefully done."

"The ties of commerce must also be allowed to grow across the boundaries within and beyond the region and Canadian business stands ready to contribute their shares to a more prosperous future."

"We know that further progress will be achieved throughout the region in relieving poverty, protecting the environment and promoting human rights."

"Let me take this moment now to recognise the accomplishments of Her Majesty Queen Noor in those areas as well as in health, education and culture. At her initiative and under her leadership impressive gains have been made in the quality of life enjoyed by the people in Jordan and throughout the Middle East."

"Your Majesty, you have a proud record of service to Jordan and to the world, including efforts to bring about peace."

On Thursday, the King and Queen attended a lunch hosted in their honour by the Conference of the Presidents of Major Jewish Organisations in the U.S.

King Hussein said in a speech that he was hopeful that the U.S. will forgive the remainder of Jordan's debts.

Jordan, he said, was looking forward to the Amman

economic summit, which, he said, will constitute a good opportunity to exchange views on issues of common interest and to carry out projects stipulated in the peace treaty.

"I look forward with great hope to the success of the Amman conference, which we will be hosting towards the end of the year and which, we hope, will be more specific in addressing areas of common concern, projects that are already under study, and presenting opportunities for all our friends to come and join us and be our partners in the peace building process and share its generous results," the King said.

"We are already working very rapidly on projects regarding the valley of peace, the rift valley... in terms of all the resources available," he said.

"Hopefully, the region will open up as a whole... without any hindrances or restrictions from, to and across the region," King Hussein said. "We hope all the barriers that have affected people, their potential and their opportunities, will be no more."

King Hussein said Jordan's parliament is prepared to amend laws where necessary to conform to the new "reality of peace."

What Jordan seeks, he said, is "not war, nor a state of 'no peace and no war,' but a state of peace for all times to come."

King Hussein said he hoped the peace agreement would encourage "a warmer atmosphere" in which Palestinians, would speak for themselves through the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

But the United States, he said, must fulfil a leadership role in "solving the problem that burdens us from the past, when Jordan bore the greatest impact of the Palestinian tragedy."

King Hussein, accompanied by Queen Noor, was warmly received by the group at a Manhattan hotel. Lester Pollack, chairman of the leaders conference, told the monarch that his organisation supported Jordan's economic development.

King Hussein meanwhile received cables from senior officials congratulating him on his full recovery from cancer and wishing him good health and happiness.

The cables were sent by Acting Prime Minister Abdul Raouf Al Rawabdeh, Speaker of the Upper House of Parliament Ahmad Lawzi, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Abdul Hafez Mirai, the chiefs of the Intelligence, Public Security and Civil Defence Departments.

The cables expressed happiness and joy for the King's full recovery and pledged to remain faithful and loyal to the Hashemite leadership.



Palestinian police examine the site of the explosion in Gaza

Gaza blast blows lid off PLO-Hamas rivalry

By Robert Mahoney
Reuter

GAZA — The mysterious explosion that killed one of Gaza's most wanted Islamic militants has blown the lid off simmering rivalry between Hamas and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

The uneasy truce between the two groups living for influence in the PLO-ruled Gaza Strip is again teetering, senior figures on both sides say.

Political dialogue between Hamas and Yasser Arafat's self-rule authority has stopped, they said, although security chiefs are still in touch in an attempt to

prevent violence. Fear of Lebanese-style civil strife has checked Mr. Arafat from unleashing his 17,000-strong police force against Hamas.

It in turn has refrained from striking the PLO while keeping up attacks against Israel and killing Palestinians who collaborate with the Jewish state.

But Sunday's explosion has stoked the anger and frustration of the radical military elements in Hamas who brand the PLO as collaborators for their 1993 peace agreement with Israel, Hamas sources said.

Hamas quickly blamed Israel for the explosion and said the Palestinian author-

ity also bore responsibility. Israel denied its agents were behind the blast, which tore apart a Gaza city flat killing guerrilla Kamal Kheil, two fellow Hamas members, a child and two other civilians.

The blast was so powerful that police have been unable to piece together all the body parts and wreckage of the final toll.

The Palestinian authority said Mr. Kheil, reputed to have worn a belt of explosives to prevent his being captured alive, blew himself up accidentally in a Hamas "bomb factory."

Security sources said Mr. Kheil sometimes acted as a lone wolf and defied Hamas

rules against making bombs in residential areas. They said the Hamas accusations against the PLO were designed to conceal dissent within its own ranks.

Whatever the truth, Mr. Kheil's death has added to Mr. Arafat's woes from both Israel and Palestinians.

Israel, which is stalling further implementation of self-rule until it is satisfied the PLO can stop Palestinian "terrorism," sent Mr. Arafat a "told-you-so" message after the bomb factory blast, PLO sources said.

It now fears a fresh wave of Hamas bombings. It is unlikely to reopen its hor-

ders with Gaza and the West Bank, thus worsening the poverty and unemployment that already weaken support for Arafat's peace accord.

This discontent is fertile ground for Hamas, a strong political force with a small but deadly military wing numbering fewer than 100 guerrillas in Gaza, according to security sources.

A few hawks around Mr. Arafat want him to crush this wing, the Qassam brigades. But despite finding documents showing that Mr. Kheil was prepared to attack the authority, Mr. Arafat ruled out a crackdown on Hamas, a senior Palestinian official said.

Some PLO officials even hoped that Mr. Kheil's death might strengthen the moderates within Hamas who favour dialogue with the PLO.

This notion was scotched, however, by one Qassam member as he stood with thousands by Mr. Kheil's freshly dug grave. Blaming Israel and its collaborators he vowed vengeance for Kheil's death.

Would this include attacks against the Palestinian authority, he was asked? A wry smile and shrug of the shoulders.

"I can't say," he whispered. "But these thoughts are not far from the mind of some in the movement."

Syria-Israel army talks unlikely soon

(Continued from page 1)

truth," Mr. Sharaa told Future Television, a private station owned by Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, in the recorded interview.

"Security should be balanced, parallel and equal on both sides of the 4th of June line," Mr. Sharaa said.

On Wednesday, President Bill Clinton declared that there was a "good chance to reach an agreement between Israel and Syria."

The leaders of both countries are searching for a settlement, Mr. Clinton said. Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak agreed after a

White House meeting.

"I think President Assad wants peace. I think prime Minister Rabin wants peace," Mr. Mubarak said.

This, in turn, could help pave the way to an overall treaty, though Mr. Clinton told reporters "we realise that cannot be done overnight."

Mr. Mubarak said there would be no reason for Israel to have nuclear weapons in the event of peace with Syria. He called on Israel to construct "in a sincere and constructive spirit" his proposal to make the Middle East a nuclear-free zone.

The Haaretz daily said on Friday Israel has been acquiring raw materials from Syria for more than a year by shipping them through third countries.

Israel officials were not immediately available to comment.

Haaretz, quoting unnamed Israeli sources, said the deals were initiated by a company controlled by Israel and done via straw companies in third countries but with "full knowledge and approval of the most senior levels in the Syrian government."

It said the materials were brought directly from Syria to Israel but that Syria was not an important source for them.

The newspaper did not specify what raw materials were involved.

bomb factory in the heart of Gaza City, while Hamas charges it was an Israeli attack carried out with the collaboration of the Palestinian Authority.

Leading Hamas member Sheikh Ahmad Bahr renewed accusations against the self-rule authority at Friday prayers.

In a sermon to thousands of worshippers at Gaza's Palestine Mosque, Sheikh Bahr said: "The authority was very happy that Kamal was killed because he was wanted by the Israelis."

Ross urges Arafat to address fears

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Abed Rabbo also told reporters that "Israel's settlement policy is very dangerous for the peace process and we call on Israel and the United States to work to stop this activity."

He was referring to Israeli Housing Minister Binyamin Ben Eliezer's plans for the construction of 5,000 new homes in Arab East Jerusalem and the occupied West Bank.

"We stressed that the closure is a destructive measure against the Palestinian economy and against the agreement," Mr. Abed Rabbo said, adding the Palestinians told Mr. Ross they expected the U.S. to take a clear position on these issues.

Meanwhile, more than 1,000 Hamas supporters called for revenge Friday at the funeral of a Palestinian who died of injuries sustained in a huge explosion in Gaza City.

Said Al Daas, 30, owned the apartment which was torn apart by the blast Sunday.

His death Friday raised to six the number of people killed in the blast, according to Palestinian police. Hamas said four died.

Demonstrators brandished the green flags of the Islamic Resistance Movement,

administrative committee would pursue the same policy of their four former colleagues, that is, they will fight moves to normalise Jordanian relations with Israel.

Last February, Mu'nis Razzaz resigned from the association's presidency. Six members of the administrative committee followed suit.

Mr. Razzaz said he resigned because he could not tolerate a "chaotic" atmosphere.

According to Mr. Razzaz, a prominent writer and novelist, the hardliners waste the association's time, disregard cultural problems and invoke futile debates over the

issue of normalisation. Both streams within the association claim they are against cultural normalisation, or normalising cultural relations with Israel. But the hardliners say the Democratic Cultural stream shows more "leniency" towards the issue and does not take a firm stand against "normalisers."

According to Mr. Mahadin, a member of the anti-normalisation committee at the Arab Writers Union, the clashes will continue since a compromise between the two streams over the issue of normalisation would be difficult to reach.

Sarid urges dismantling of colonies

(Continued from page 1)

The fresh debate over the future of Netzarim came a day after Israeli media leaked plans by Mr. Rabin's housing minister, Benjamin Ben-Eliezer, to build more than 5,000 new homes in Jewish West Bank settlements abutting Jerusalem.

Such plans would require government approval. Mr. Rabin's junior coalition party, the liberal Meretz bloc, has said it would try to block the construction plans when they are brought before the cabinet on Sunday.

PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat on Friday denounced the reported building plans as a "flagrant violation of the (peace) agreement."

Under the autonomy accord, all 144 Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza are to be left in place

during the interim period, with their fate to be determined in final status talks that begin in 1996. In hopes of bringing the Palestinians into the peace talks, Mr. Rabin had promised in 1992 to curb construction.

The accord also says that in the second stage of Palestinian self-rule, Israeli troops must pull out of all West Bank towns on the eve of Palestinian general elections.

Officials said the population of Maale Adumim, a Jerusalem suburb in the West Bank, is growing at a much faster rate than it did under Likud administration.

"At the present rate, Maale Adumim's population will double by 1996 or 1997, to 30,000 from the 1992 figure of 15,000."

The new proposal irked Meretz, the main coalition

partner. Mr. Meretz said the new building could harm the delicate Israel-PLO peace process.

Mr. Sarid told Israel Radio that Meretz ministers would appeal a committee decision to build new settler housing "in order to lessen if not cancel altogether the damage that could be done."

If the committee approves the additional housing it would bring the total number of units it has approved this year for building, planning, or sale in the West Bank to about 8,000, according to figures compiled by the Peace Now movement.

The Jerusalem "municipality" in February approved the building of an additional 6,500 homes for Jews in Arab East Jerusalem, which is not under the ministerial committee's authority.

Doctors vote, will defy directive

(Continued from page 12)

the association did not feel bound by the directive.

Since 1968, only nine of the council's members have been elected by the general assembly in Amman. The 10th member has until now been representative of West Bank physicians, elected in separate polls in Jerusalem following elections in Amman.

Association members described the order as interference with the association's laws.

In its annual meeting held only last week, the association's general assembly reconfirmed a statute according to which a seat is reserved for a West Bank delegate.

The minister's instructions to exclude a West Bank member is seen as part of the government's drive to implement its 1988 decision to sever all legal and administrative ties with the West Bank.

The Jordanian Bar Association was the first professional association to receive similar directives to exclude its West Bank members from electoral procedures from the minister of justice, Hisham

Al Tel. The Bar Association has been taken to court by the minister for defying his instructions.

Mr. Tel at the time rejected claims that the order to exclude West Bank members of the Bar Association from voting in the association's elections was politically motivated. He told the Jordan Times that "according to me, there is no political reason" for this instruction.

"All West Bank colleagues have no right to vote in Jordan because of the decision taken in 1988 of administrative separation."

"This is only for legality's sake," Mr. Tel said at the time. "Everyone must abide by the law," by excluding West Bank professionals from membership in Jordanian professional associations.

Dr. Maraka criticised both the timing of the minister's letter, which reached him in the evening before elections, as well as its content. He told the Jordan Times that he could not see the need for interference by the govern-

ment in a process of disengagement that was taking place naturally. "Once West bank physicians have set up their own medical association, they will themselves ask for separation," Dr. Maraka said.

The minister's letter quoted articles from the association's law as the legal basis for the directives. Article 27 of the 1972 law states that "the affairs of the association are administered by a council consisting of a president and 10 members elected by the general assembly."

Further, article 4, paragraph (a) states that "registered by the association must be physicians residing in the Kingdom and practising their profession here."

The association's decision to ignore the minister's instructions and to reserve a seat on the council for the West Bank delegate could theoretically provide grounds for legal action.

Results of Friday's elections, in which four candidates were contesting the presidency and 44 candidates were running for the executive council, were not released by press time.

Intervention nerves keep ailing dollar afloat

LONDON (R) — The dollar steadied nervously in European trade on Friday after plunging to a new post-war low on the yen in the Far East, but dealers said only fear of possible central bank intervention was keeping the currency afloat.

Dollar buying by the U.S. Federal Reserve, the German Bundesbank and the Bank of Japan earlier this week proved largely ineffective. But dealers said a renewed onslaught could have a greater impact in thin pre-weekend trading.

"Actions both physical and verbal by central banks over the last couple of days are bound to have some sort of effect when you are coming up towards a weekend in a fairly thin market," a senior dealer at a Finnish bank in London said.

The dollar was trading at around 64 yen in mid-morning, above a fresh 83.65 yen low seen overnight. On the mark it climbed to 1.3770 marks from 1.3730 late on Thursday.

Traders were looking

ahead to U.S. jobless data due later on Friday for clues on the country's economic outlook.

The dollar's renewed slide triggered fresh calls from international leaders for policy action to calm markets.

French Economy Minister Edmond Alphandery said he wanted finance ministers of the Group of Seven industrialised nations to discuss ways to stabilise exchange rates along the lines of the Plaza and Louvre accords at a meeting later this month.

These two accords engineered a controlled fall in the dollar in the 1980s, and then stabilised the currency at a lower rate.

Jean-Claude Paye, secretary-general of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), also called for greater policy coordination between the three major industrialised countries, Japan, Germany and the United States.

"The solution is further strengthening compatibility and integrity of international

policies," he said in Tokyo. But senior German officials turned up the heat on Washington, blaming the U.S. authorities for the dollar's slide.

In one of the most forthright comments by a senior figure in Bonn, Economics Minister Guenter Rexrodt said the problem lay with the failure of U.S. policymakers to cut the budget deficit.

"Our interest rates are not the problem. In Germany we have an appropriate level of interest rates. The problem is the Americans and their budget policy," he told a German newspaper.

Bundesbank deputy president Johann Wilhelm Gadam was slightly more diplomatic, saying the weakness of the dollar and some European currencies was due to a loss of market confidence in the ability of governments to solve their budget problems.

European stock markets were mostly firmer, shrugging off the currency turbulence, but waiting for the jobless data from the United States.

EMI warns about unemployment, says growth outlook for EU good

FRANKFURT, Germany (AP) — Although economic growth prospects for 1995 in the European Union (EU) are bright, wage restraint is needed to keep inflation in check, the European Monetary Institute (EMI) has said.

The institute tempered the optimistic outlook by warning about high unemployment, governmental fiscal deficits and high levels of public debt.

The inflation rate in the EU overall is expected to fall below three per cent, the institute said, but central banks must remain vigilant.

The institute's first annual report was presented by its president, Alexandre Lamfalussy, at a news conference in Frankfurt.

The institute was set up in January 1994 as the precursor for the future European central bank. Its job is to pave the way for the single European currency as stipulated by the Maastricht treaty and to supervise the convergence of the economies of EU states.

"Viewed from the end of 1994, the overall growth perspective for 1995 has clearly brightened further, both for the 12 existing member states and the three new entrants," the report said. "Economic activity is growing faster than expected and the rise in unemployment rates has come to an end."

"On a less favourable note, however, high levels of structural unemployment, the pattern of fiscal deficits and levels of public debt continue to constitute major challenges," the report said.

To allow inflation to drop under three per cent as forecast, central banks must remain vigilant about their interest rate policies, "not only to safeguard progress made thus far in fostering price stability, but also to enable further progress in countries where inflation is still relatively high."

The institute said progress toward price stability "cannot yet be considered wholly satisfactory."

While a majority of EU states kept their annual inflation rates below or around two to 2.5 per cent, Germany recorded three per cent, Spain, Italy and Portugal were in the range between 3.9 per cent and 5.2 per cent, and Greece showed a rate of slightly below 11 per cent in 1994.

"continued wage restraint, as well as determined structural adjustment measures — including fiscal consolidation — are critical to enhance the durability of non-inflationary recovery," the report said.

"The score for wage increases should not be misjudged and fiscal consolidation efforts should be pursued with determination in a period in which the cyclical upswing tends to mask the underlying structural problems," it added.

Unemployment peaked in the EU as a whole at nearly 12 per cent in 1994, before beginning to decline slowly. "A common factor appears to be the existence of substantial structural problems," the report said.

The deterioration of fiscal positions in EU countries was a major concern, the institute said.

The general government deficit of the union as a whole fell only marginally in 1994, to 5.6 per cent of the general domestic product (GDP).

Overall, the gross public debt ratio of the union as a whole climbed to almost 69 per cent of the GDP in 1994, compared with nearly 61 per cent two years earlier, the report said.

The report urged EU governments to put their emphasis on expenditure cuts rather than on increase in revenue, and urged labour market reforms.

Most countries in the EU at present would not qualify for monetary union, the majority because of their fiscal positions, the report said. The Maastricht treaty calls for monetary union in 1999 at the latest.

The common currency, known as ECU, for European Currency Unit, will have seven banknotes ranging in face value from ECU 5 to ECU 500, while the highest face value for coins will be ECU 2, the institute said.

The range of options regarding the general appearance of the banknotes has been narrowed to two, and work has started on the selection of themes on which to base the design of banknotes, the institute said.

Arab economy ministers to meet Tuesday

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab finance and economy ministers will meet in Oman next week to discuss development activities in their countries and reforms by some members of the 22-member Arab League, an official statement has said.

The ministers and central bank governors who head the League's main financial and economic bodies meet annually to assess the previous year's performance.

The bodies include the Arab Monetary Fund (AMF), the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD), the Arab Corporation for Investment Guarantee (ACIG), the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (ABEDA) and the Khartoum-based Arab Authority for Agricultural Investment and Development.

A statement from the Abu Dhabi-based AFESD said the April 11-12 talks in the Omani capital Muscat would cover

the economic and financial situation in member states during 1994 and reform programmes.

The five organisations will also present reports on their operations last year and the results of their efforts to support development.

The five funds were created by governments in the region to finance industrial, agricultural, social and other projects in member states through extending soft loans. Their operations also involve technical assistance and aid to shore up balance of payment deficits, finance reforms and guarantee exports.

According to official Arab figures, the AFESD has provided nearly \$2.4 billion in loans while around \$6.3 billion have been extended by AFESD.

Loans by ABEDA totalled around \$1.2 billion and those by ACIG exceeded \$1.1 billion, mostly for guaranteeing

exports and investment.

Apart from such institutions, Iraq and other Gulf oil producers have created their own funds to extend aid to Arabs and other developing nations. Their combined financial assistance exceeded \$38 billion by the end of 1994 while aid from all Arab funds and governments totalled \$100 billion.

The AMF statement did not provide figures on economic performance in the Arab countries for 1994, but their combined gross domestic product (GDP) stood at nearly \$507.6 billion in 1993 in current prices compared with around \$480.8 billion in 1992. This means a growth rate of 5.57 per cent.

Positive growth rates were achieved mainly in Algeria, Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon and other countries involved in reforms, according to the AMF. Some oil-rich Gulf nations recorded negative rates due to lower oil prices.

Turkish inflation falls, premier sees further decline

ANKARA (R) — Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Ciller has predicted the country's triple-digit inflation would fall sharply over the next two months.

"This year we will correct internal balances and inflation will decline. We will see sharp falls in inflation in May and June and ensure that this decline continues," Ms. Ciller told her party's parliamentary group meeting.

According to official figures, annual wholesale price inflation fell to 144.3 per cent last month from 149.8 per cent in February. Consumer price inflation stood at 127.7 per cent in March, down from 130 per cent in February.

Economists expect inflation to fall to around 92 per cent in April when 1994's 33 per cent April inflation drops out of the 12-monthly index calculation and is replaced by a probably much lower rate expected at around five per cent this month.

Inflation may fall further to below 90 per cent in May. But the government's end-year wholesale price inflation target of 40 per cent is almost impossible to achieve, economists say. Wholesale prices have risen 23.1 per cent so far this year.

Economists say high military spending, increased by the ongoing operation in northern Iraq against rebel Kurds, may hamper Turkey's efforts to curb fiscal deficits and to lower inflation.

Lieutenant General Hasan Kucukdaci, commander of the incursion, told the private ATV channel the operation

would cost about 740 billion lira (\$18 million).

Some officials fear the military drive, which has drawn strong criticism from the West, may hamper Turkey's efforts to regain access to international borrowing markets and to get an IMF approval for its 1995 economic programme.

Ms. Ciller said the treasury, which has succeeded in extending its borrowing maturity to 12 months from three since January, would lengthen the time span up to two years by June.

"In line with the decline in interest rates, investments will rise," she said.

Businessmen, hit by inflation and a six per cent fall in gross national product in 1994, have urged the government to revitalise the economy.

They blame Ms. Ciller's economic programme, which has been in place since April 5, 1994, for a severe shrinkage in industrial production — 4.4 per cent in the first two months of this year.

The programme, backed by the International Monetary Fund, has stabilised financial markets and the Turkish lira but failed to narrow huge public deficits or speed up privatisation.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY APRIL 8, 1995

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) This is a good day to see bigwigs who can assist you with some project which is vital to your welfare. Talk intelligently to a knowledgeable person.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Go along with the views off allies today since the planets favour them today. Some new contact from a distance can help you tonight.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You can make business plans with fellow associates which can bring fine advancements to you today.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You can see how to put some talent you to work to your great benefit, and bigwigs can also be of help to you.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Those who dwell with you may have different ideas than yours today, but try to come to a workable arrangement with them.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Talk over plans with partners you want to continue with for tonight. You can get some special talents to work today.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Financial affairs should be first on the agenda and then get your property improved in some way. Listen to the ideas of a family member.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You can advance very quickly today through that plan you have formulated. Get in touch with experts who can be of great help to you.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Make better plans and don't talk so much and go to advisors of any assistance you may need for a very important project.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You have good judgement today and you should go after what is important welfare. Have fun and be happy with your mate.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) If you want your career activities to run very smoothly, it is best to gain the assistance of couple of bigwigs.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Gain the bigwigs in order to make that new plan you have worked very efficiently. When that you have wisdom to handle any situation which may develop.

Birthstone of April: Diamond — Amethyst

THE Daily Crossword by Joan D. Barbrich

ACROSS

1 Honor or color

6 The together

10 Happy hour

14 Italian city

15 Bonnie Johnson

16 To (unanimously)

17 Hockey prize

19 Jacob's son

20 Term of endorsement, briefly

21 Sent or serve

22 Sista

23 Log camp

27 Center of Desert Storm

30 Plus

31 Leading color

32 Fed the lobby

33 Young scold

36 Adolescent

37 Passion

38 Total admission

39 receipt

40 Previous to

41 Paper money

42 Evil spirit

43 Powerful one

44 May source

45 In dotage

46 Past

47 Shoes with

48 Lion's pride

49 Theater prizes

50 French city

51 UED part

52 Storage building

53 Butler substitute

54 "Knots"

55 Impede, in law

56 River in Belgium

57 "Kiss Me"

58 Addict

59 Exorcism cry

60 Dressed to the

61 In addition

62 Hammer part

63 Leave no —

64 unreturned

65 Tiled lady

66 Harrow rival

67 Disposed

68 Hormone drug

69 Sets

70 Local

71 Repudiate

72 Sybil's labor

73 Fine sword

74 Adventure

75 Place of office

76 Being

77 Slow one's —

78 Labyrinth owner

79 Building cheer

80 Originally named

81 River island

82 River island

83 River island

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Japan surplus to rise for a while — economists

TOKYO (R) — Japan's current account surplus in dollar terms is likely to continue rising for a while because of the yen's recent steep appreciation against the dollar, economists have said.

"It won't be easy for the trade surplus to decrease, because of the yen's rise and strong overseas economies," said Masahisa Okada, researcher at Tokai Bank Ltd.

Earlier, the government said Japan's surplus in its unadjusted current account, its broadest measure of trade in goods and services, rose to \$12.33 billion in February from \$12.15 billion a year earlier and \$3.69 billion the previous month.

The yen's rise temporarily inflates the value of exports even as it theoretically depresses export volume in the longer term, by making

Japanese goods more costly and less competitive, economists said.

In addition to this so-called "J-curve effect," they said the yen's precipitous rise against the dollar in March are expected to force Japanese exporters to raise prices of exported goods.

"Such price hikes by exporting firms will increase the value of exports in the short term," said Nobuyuki Saji, senior economist at Nikko Research Centre Ltd.

The temporary effects of the yen's appreciation against the dollar pushing up the Japanese current account surplus could last for about half a year, Nikko Research's Saji said.

Whether the Japanese surplus increases or not after that period depends a lot on overseas demand, economists

said.

"Even if the high yen depresses the competitiveness of Japanese goods, the U.S. demand is strong," Mr. Saji said.

Tokai Bank's Okada said Asia's vigorous economies would boost the Japanese trade surplus.

Meanwhile, a ministry of finance (MOF) official told reporters that Japan's current account surplus is still on an overall shrinking trend.

"February's current account surplus increased because of a reaction to January's sharp drop," he added. The January drop was due to that month's earthquake in central Japan, which delayed export shipments and led to a surge in exports during February, he said.

British Airways increases Amman flights

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — As a sign of increased European interest in Jordan and expectations of increased business links, and economic cooperation and tourism, British Airways (BA) has announced that it was raising to four its weekly flights in and out of Amman.

The increase from two

flights a week, with effect April 29, is coupled with the resumption of BA flights to Beirut and Damascus.

Jordan figures high in British Airways marketing in Britain, with the tourist attractions in the Kingdom featuring in many BA-sponsored projects.

British Airways resumed Amman flights in December after a five-year hiatus.

"The increasing traffic

between Amman and London has warranted that we add additional flights," said Rose Luty, British Airways sales manager in Jordan.

"With the growth of both business and tourism to Jordan it is my hope that before too long the market will be able to sustain a daily service by British Airways between Amman and Heathrow," said Ms. Luty.

The recent visit of British Prime Minister John Major

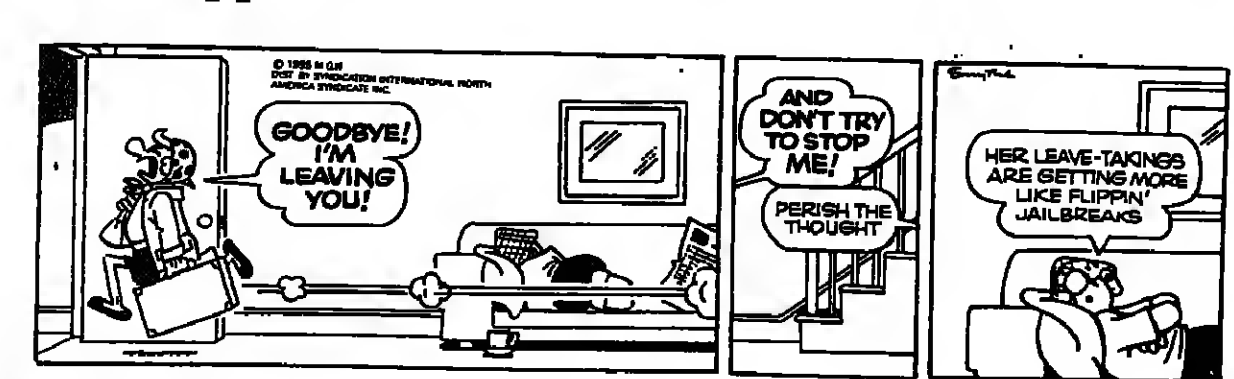
and a major British business delegation to Jordan was widely seen as a big boost to business links.

Jordanian businessmen say that during the talks they held with chief executives of some of the major British companies who accompanied the prime minister, many proposals were discussed and joint projects with British expertise and partial equity could materialise soon.

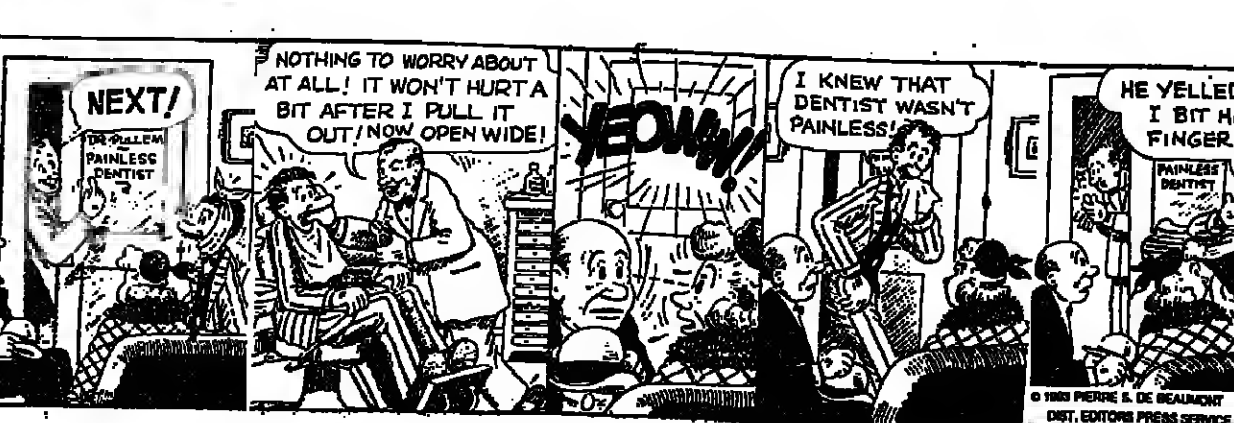
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF

By Glasbergen



"I like to hold your hand in the mall. It's fun to watch other women's faces when they see I'm not available!"

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

UNDET

WALUF

DAVULE

TRAUME

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: A

Yesterday's Jumbles: JUICE BOUND BUTTER PACKET

Heavyweight champions, or belt babysitters?

LAS VEGAS (R) — Instead of calling them world heavyweight champions, the winners of the two titles up for grabs on Saturday could just as well be dubbed world champion babysitters.

That's because many people believe the two fighters who will end up with the World Boxing Association (WBA) and World Boxing Council (WBC) belts will be just tucking them in safe and snug for the man of the house of come home and claim them.

That man, of course, is Mike Tyson, fresh from three years in prison and flush from signing a six-figure, multi-million-dollar deal aimed at having him reclaim the heavyweight mansion, which he has dominated — in or out of prison, with or without a title — for years.

In addition to the two heavyweight title fights, three other championship bouts will be on the card at Caesars Palace.

WBC super lightweight champion Julio Cesar Chavez of Mexico (93-1-1) will defend against 29-1 Giovanni Parisi of Italy, and International Boxing Federation (IBF) welterweight titlist Felix Trinidad of Puerto Rico (25-0) will take on Roger Turner (29-2) of the United States.

WBC super welterweight champion Luis Santana of the Dominican Republic (39-15-2) will fight Terry Norris of

the United States in a rematch of their controversial first fight.

In that fight last November, Norris (38-5) was the champion and ended a fifth-round flurry of punches to Santana's head with a blow to the back of the head. The Dominican went down and stayed flat on his back for several minutes. Norris was disqualified and lost his title.

Chavez, 32, is on the downside of a great career. He no longer has his once vaunted power or speed, but still is aggressive and damaging, especially to the body.

BOXING ROUNDUP

Chavez is a 6-1 favourite, but the relatively-unknown Parisi is given a better chance by some to upset the Mexican hero by using exceptional speed and sharp counter punches.

Trinidad, 22, is considered by many to be one of the best pound-for-pound fighters in the world. His last two victories were against fighters who were a combined 88-0.

There are good reasons why Turner, 31, is a 12-1 underdog.

In the first of the heavyweight babysitting try-outs on Saturday, Tony Tucker will fight Bruce Seldon for the WBC crown. Then former champion Larry Holmes, 45, gets to stay up

late to try to take away Oliver McCall's WBC title.

Holmes first won the heavyweight title from Ken Norton in 1978 and was champion for seven years.

There probably is no one craftier than Holmes, who appears to have trained very hard for the shorter, stockier McCall, 29.

But crafty can't be exchanged for years.

If Holmes, an 8-5 underdog, wins, he will not stay around long after he sees Tyson coming to get the title, but likely will try to use his victory to get a fight with

George Foreman. Holmes candidly says he wants no part of Tyson, who in 1988 crushed him in the fourth round.

Seven years later Holmes isn't likely to do much better, and there's always the opposite of much better for him to contemplate.

McCall, a former sparring partner for Tyson, won the WBC title by stopping an amateurish Lennox Lewis with a right hand to the face in the second round last September.

McCall, 25-5, brings a rock-solid chin and will try to get inside Holmes' famous jab and look to end the fight early.

Young Hustler favourite at Grand National

LIVERPOOL (R) — Young Hustler replaced Master Oaks as favourite for Saturday's Grand National at Aintree after another day of sunshine shifted the odds away from soft ground horses.

Nigel Twiston-Davies' eight-year-old, 20-1 just a fortnight ago, is now a 6-1 favourite, pushing Cheltenham Gold Cup champion Master Oaks to 13-2 along with last year's winner Minneboma.

"As the ground is drying up, so is the money for Master Oaks," explained Mike Dillon from bookmakers Ladbrokes.

"Young Hustler is a real springer in the market. He was 20-1 a week ago and the fact that he relishes fast ground has caused everyone to latch on to him and force him to favouritism."

The going at Aintree for the world's most famous steeplechase was described officially as good to firm in places with the prospect of rain later on Friday.

Dean Gallagher, who will take his second ride in the race on Gold Cup runner-up Dubacilla, said: "The surface is beautiful, like a carpet."

Society plans to revive 2,300 year-old Nemean Games in ancient stadium

ATHENS (AP) — American archaeologists and residents of the Greek village of Nemea are teaming up to revive the athletic games that took place there more than 2,300 years ago.

But, unlike the highly competitive and commercialised modern Olympics, which also are descended from ancient Greece, these games are intended to be a simple, family affair. Unlike the ancient games, women will be able to participate.

Organisers hope to bring together people of all ages and nationalities on June 1, 1996, for foot races in the ancient stadium that was inaugurated last year after excavations that began in 1973.

"We want to do what we do well, and with as much authenticity as possible. We believe that our goals for the competitions should be modest, but that our goals for participation should be as great as possible," archaeologist Stephen G. Miller told a news conference in Athens.

Miller, a professor at the University of California at Berkeley, directed the Nemea excavations. The ancient Greeks celebrated festivals with athletic contests at Delphi, Isthmia, Nemea and Olympia — the inspiration for the modern games. Nemea's stadium was built around 330 B.C., on the site of an older one, in what is now a vine-filled valley on the Peloponnese Peninsula about 108 kilometres from Athens.

The Society for the Revival of the Nemean Games, which was formally established on Wednesday, says that no records will be kept and no medals awarded. Winners will

be crowned with a wreath of wild celery — Nemea's trademark. At Delphi, ancient winners were crowned with laurel, at Isthmia with pine and at Olympia with parsley.

Each year, one of the ancient sites hosted athletes from all Greece for a brief time during which warring states observed a sacred truce.

The new Nemean Games will be open to anyone over 12 years of age. They are intended to give participants the chance to race barefoot along the same clay surface that the ancient athletes thundered down. Runners' families will picnic on the stadium's grassy embankments.

Runners will wear tunics similar to those of ancient Greece, unlike their ancestors who raced naked.

The idea for the games arose from the inauguration of the excavated stadium last year, in which boys and girls of various ages competed in separate races.

"That gave birth to the idea that the Nemean Games could take place on a regular basis... and that they could serve as a means to bring people together from around the world to celebrate our common heritage," said Aristotelis D. Kallis, a physician who is the society's chairman.

The society, made up mostly by Nemea residents, is trying to find donors for the modest funds needed to cover the cost of, among other things, the tunics and chemical toilets needed for the games.

The races will be 100 metres and 200 metres in length, leaving out several events from the past.

"We want to avoid certain legal problems that might follow upon wrestling or boxing matches," Miller said.

Olympic track schedule completed

MONTE CARLO (AP) — The track and field schedule for next year's Atlanta Olympics has finally been completed, with the men's marathon set to begin at 6:30 p.m. on the final day.

Bob Brennan, spokesman for the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games, said Thursday that the eight-day programme will be virtually the same as the one at the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona.

Final agreement was reached in a meeting Wednesday between ACOG sports director Dave Maggard and Istvan Gyulai, secretary general of the International Amateur Athletic Federation.

"There's some fine-tuning to do yet, but basically the schedule is done," Brennan said.



The U.S. president of the Atlanta Committee for the '96 Olympic Games, Billy Payne (right), presents the Olympic torch to the head of the Greek Olympic Committee, Antonis Tsikas, during their meeting in Athens (AFP photo).

Track and field was the last of the 26 sports on the Atlanta programme to finalise its competition schedule.

The process was held up in part due to debate over the timing of the men's marathon. Some athletes and officials pressed for an early morning start, warning that Atlanta's heat and humidity could diminish the competition and endanger the health of the runners.

But the IAAF said the race should start at the traditional hour, with the top finishers entering the stadium just before the closing ceremony on Aug. 4, 1996.

"The decision on the marathon time was made by the IAAF, which represents the athletes," Brennan said.

"The IAAF medical committee feels the climatic conditions in Atlanta will be similar to those in Barcelona."

Gascoigne slated to return after year's absence

ROME (AP) — "Gazza" is returning, and none too soon for Lazio of Rome.

English midfielder Paul Gascoigne will suit up when Lazio hosts Reggiana on Sunday, almost exactly one year after he suffered a career-threatening leg injury.

And Lazio, fifth in the Italian first division but coming off a disappointing 0-0 draw with lowly Cremonese, needs the fiery player. Just four points separate Lazio from ninth place.

Gascoigne, who captured the soccer world's fascination with his talent and emotion at the 1990 World Cup, fractured the tibia and fibula in his right leg on April 7, 1994, while tackling a teammate in practice. The subsequent operation was his fourth in three years on that leg.

Although injury prone, Gascoigne has been looked to for on-the-field brilliance throughout his career. It's the flair and leadership that moved Lazio to pay Eng-

land's Tottenham \$8.8 million for his transfer in 1992.

"Gascoigne can change many things (for Lazio), but it is important to have patience," Giorgio Chinaglia, the former Lazio and New York Cosmos star, said recently.

Lazio has been inconsistent from outing to outing, and cannot afford to lose to the likes of Reggiana, 17th in the 18-team league. The clubs drew 0-0 in the ninth round.

The Romans have three players disqualified from the match: forward Diego Fuser and defenders Cristiano Bergodi and Roberto Cravero. The backline will also miss Paulo Negro, out with a right hamstring pull.

As it is, Lazio's weakness all season has been its defense. Reggiana, however, is not likely to capitalise. It has scored only 17 goals, second fewest in the league.

It is an ideal match for Gascoigne to make his return: before the home fans, against a weak opponent,

with his team needing a lift. And with two weeks to get game-ready for the derby against crosstown rival AS Roma.

League leader Juventus of Turin plays its derby Sunday, facing a Torino club that has moved itself into contention for a UEFA Cup berth.

Juve, leading second-place AC Parma by a healthy nine points, will be without team leader Gianluca Vialli and his 13 goals. Vialli pulled his left hamstring in Tuesday's UEFA Cup semifinal tie with Borussia Dortmund and is out indefinitely.

Alessandro Del Piero, who recently made his national team debut, will start in Vialli's place.

Juve will have to focus defensively on forward Ruggiero Rizzitelli, who has a career-best 10 goals this season, and midfielder Abedi Pele, whose two late goals helped Torino rally for a 3-2 win over Cagliari last round.

Torino upset Juve 3-2 in the teams' first meeting, and

needs another positive result to move up from eighth place.

Parma, 1-0 losers to third-place Roma last Sunday, faces AC Milan, in fourth after falling to Juve 2-0.

Parma looked good in defeating Bayer Leverkusen 2-1 in a UEFA Cup semifinal first-leg on Tuesday, and must win to keep the heat on Juventus. Milan's Croatian midfielder Zvonimir Boban is out suspended.

Roma travels to 11th-place Napoli without Italian international defender Amendico Carboni and midfielder Francesco Statuto, both disqualified, and injured Uruguayan forward Daniel Fonseca.

Fiorentina, one point ahead of Torino, faces Bari without suspended Argentine striker Gabriel Batistuta, whose 20 goals lead the league.

Other matches Sunday: Brescia-Padova; Cagliari-Foggia; Inter of Milan-Genoa; and Sampdoria of Genoa-Cremonese.

PASSPORT LOST

I am Paramjit Singh Sawaran Singh from India. I lost my passport No. Y 514497 and my residence Permit No. 67769/4338. If found pls. send to P.O. Box 184038 Amman, Jordan.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMARA HIRSCH
©1994 Tribune Media Services, Inc.

WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

- Q.1—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠AK ♣J85 ♦73 ♠AKJ872
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
2 ♠ ?
What do you bid now?
- Q.2—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠AQ9542 ♣KQ3 ♣Q105 ♦7
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass
2 ♠ ?
What do you bid now?
- Q.3—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠AK93 ♣K108 ♣AK7 ♦KQ4
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
2 NT Pass 3 ♠ Pass
3 NT ?
What do you bid now?
- Q.4—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠Q876 ♣AQ85 ♣95 ♦843
The bidding has proceeded:
East South West North
Pass Pass 1 ♠ 1 ♠
2 ♠ ?
What action do you take?
- Q.5—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠Q7 ♣9 ♣QJ10652 ♠Q852
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
2 NT ?
What do you bid now?

APARTMENT FOR RENT

Furnished, deluxe standard. Three bed rooms, large guest and sitting rooms, large kitchen and other facilities. Second floor. Area 280m². Location: Shmeisani, behind Commodore Hotel. Please call 667728 for additional details.



JORDAN PHOSPHATE MINES CO LTD

ANNOUNCES THE INVITATION TO TENDER NO. 12F/95

JPMC announces the invitation to bid No. 12F/95 (for the supply of flotation reagents and chemicals for Eshidiya beneficiation plant).

The tender documents are available at JPMC offices in Amman, Supply Department, until 2:00 p.m. local time Thursday 20th April 1995. Application for documents should be accompanied by a non-refundable fee of J.D. (100) for each set of tender documents.

The closing date for submitting bids is 12:00 hours local time Monday 15th May 1995.

Sameh Madani
Managing Director

FOR SALE

Chaparral receiver. Monterey 40. Still packed for JD900. (Market price JD1300). Tel: 674484

BMW CAR FOR SALE

BMW 735, 1985 model, silver blue, duty unpaid, full options. Pls. call tel. 645733

INVESTMENT IN TOURISM PROJECTS ON THE EASTERN DEAD SEA SHORE

The Ministry of Water and Irrigation - Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) is conducting engineering studies for the following areas on the Eastern Dead Sea Shore.

- Suweimeh
- Zaza
- And other areas/Dead Sea.

Jordan Valley Authority will start soon receiving applications from investors who wish to invest in the Tourism Sector as part of Suweimeh's First Stage tourism development projects. Advertisement on other areas for development will be made later as soon as engineering studies are completed.

Qualified, experienced, and financially capable parties need only apply regardless of their nationality, and are invited to contact JVA offices/Department of Rural Development to obtain necessary information and fill special application forms. JVA will study such applications and determine preliminary appropriate locations for the proposed projects as a First Stage.

The next step would be to get necessary approvals from the JVA Board of Directors and Cabinet of Ministers. Services such as restaurants, petrol stations, commercial buildings and others are not included in the present stage, but will be advertised at a later date.

JVA has available specially prepared application forms. Submission of completed forms to the JVA shall start on Saturday 15/4/1995 and end at noon on Monday 15/5/1995.

Secretary General
Eng. Hashim Shboul

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency UNRWA VACANCY NOTICE

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East announces a vacancy of, Income-Generation Officer, Grade 13 with a monthly salary starting at JD 453,600 plus and rising in annual increments to JD 698,700 plus. The usual allowances paid by the UNRWA, such as Dependency Allowances amounting to JD 37 for spouse and 7 dependent children may be added. The post, which requires a well-qualified person, is at the Relief and Social Services Department — UNRWA Field Office — Amman.

Applicants should have (1) A university degree in business studies, economics or social development. (2) Computer literacy. (3) Five years' practical experience in income-generation with a local or international organisation involved in setting up business enterprises, and at least three years in the supervision and evaluation of such projects. (4) Excellent command of spoken and written English and Arabic. (5) Possession of a valid driver's licence is essential.

Interested qualified persons are required to complete an UNRWA application form obtainable from the various UNRWA offices in Jordan, such as the Area Offices in North Amman (Telephone No. 841260), South Amman (Telephone No. 783791), Zarqa (Telephone No. 09/983899) and Irbid (Telephone No. 02/242204), and submit it together with a recent photo to the Administration Clerks in the mentioned Area Offices, who will forward such applications to the Field Personnel Officer and Deputy Field Administration Officer. For any inquiries please contact Personnel Division at Telephone No. 687312. Deadline for applications is Thursday April 20 1995.

Cinema	Tel.: 634144	Cinema	Tel.: 699238	Cinema	Tel.: 677420	Tel.: 618274 - 618275	Tel.: 675571	Tel.: 625155
PHILADELPHIA		PLAZA		CONCORD		AMMOUN THEATRE	Nabil Al Mashini Theatre	ANHAN THEATRE
Tom Hanks in Forrest Gump Shows: 12:30, 3:15, 6:15, 9:15		Jala Fahmi, Kamal Shinnawi Najah Al Mawji... In TATA WARIKA AND MR. KATHEM shows: 12:30, 3:30, 5:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30		Comedian star: Adel Imam — Bakht & Andadileh Shows: 12:30, 3:15, 6:00, 8:30, 11:00 CONCORD '2' Jean-Claude Van Damme STREET FIGHTER Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 5:45, 11:00		Musa Hijazin "Sum'a" in the political satire Hi Citizen written and directed by Mohammed Al Shawaqia daily on 8:30 p.m. The theatre closes on Monday — Haila Al Agha in the children's play ★ ★ Sa'di's Return ★ ★	Shows of "Qirbeh Makhzouqa" will be stopped from now until further notice.	Presents: AL SALAM YA SALAM at 8:30 p.m. For reservation, please call 825155 The theatre is closed Saturdays & Sundays

Drug investigators dig up Aussie race-fixing scam

SYDNEY (AFP) — The New South Wales state Crime Commission will help police investigate allegations that top jockeys have been involved in a huge Australian race-fixing racket, officials said Friday.

The Australian Jockey Club (AJC), which regulates the racing industry here, also announced its stewards had begun inquiries into the alleged ring of 10 jockeys said to have fixed races at major meetings in Sydney, Adelaide and Brisbane.

Months of rumour and speculation in the industry culminated Friday with a report by the Sydney Morning Herald that the racket had been uncovered during an investigation by Australian Federal Police of a major drug operation.

The paper said 4,000 hours of phone conversations between jockeys, secretly taped by police between May 1993 and August last year, had revealed one of the most extensive race-fixing scams ever seen in Australia.

Transcripts of the calls which the paper had obtained reportedly revealed that

alleged conspirators in the drug deal had bribed jockeys in the three state capitals, but mainly in Sydney.

Two current senior Sydney jockeys "participated in race fixing with an alleged drug boss who is now in prison awaiting trial for drug importation," the report said.

The jockeys were said to have been involved in getting syndicate members to place bets on mounts they were riding in almost daily breach of the Australian Jockey Club's rules of racing.

The tapes indicated the race-fixing occurred during major meetings, often in several races on one day, in which horses were impaired from running on their merits.

Two of the jockeys allegedly taped denied involvement in race-fixing, but one had said "every jockey he knows had arranged for people to pay them for tips." The jockey also said that since jockeys were not allowed to bet, they might ask someone to place bets for them.

Whelan said the allegations held grave implications for Australian racing, adding: "The very story places the

integrity of racing in this state and indeed in this nation in question.

"It's absolutely essential that the public have confidence in the way racing and sporting events are conducted."

Lauer said the state investigation had been underway since December but the Crime Commission was notified a month ago when it reached a stage where its special powers were necessary to further the investigation.

"It's a recognition by the Police Service that the traditional methods of investigation need enhancement to proceed to a satisfactory conclusion and that's why we've approached the Crime Commission," Lauer said.

The AJC issued a brief statement saying its stipendiary stewards had begun an immediate inquiry into the race fixing allegations.

Detectives of the state organised crime squad are leading the investigation after the federal police handed over details to state police late last year because it concerned state rather than a federal laws.

Suns, Spurs, Rockets win on road

LANDOVER, Maryland (R)

Four of the NBA's better teams had close scrapes on the road on Thursday, but talent and experience won out in the end.

At Washington, Wesley Person scored seven of his 22 points in a decisive 13-0 burst to open the fourth quarter as the Phoenix Suns rallied from a 14-point third-quarter deficit to hand the Bullets their ninth straight loss 127-123.

Charles Barkley scored seven of his 25 points in the final 79 seconds for the Suns, who snapped a two-game losing streak and remained a half-game behind Seattle for first place in the Pacific Division.

"They played a great first half, but the best team won," Barkley said. "They have a great future, but you don't live in the future, you live in the present."

Chris Webber had 29 points, 10 rebounds and eight assists for the Bullets, who have not won since March 19.

The Suns have beaten the Bullets eight straight times and have won their last seven trips to Washington.

Phoenix guard Danny Ainge made two 3-pointers in the first half, giving him 1,000 for his career. Ainge became the third player in league history to reach the milestone, joining Denver guard Dale Ellis and Indiana guard Reggie Miller.

Calbert Cheaney scored 24 points in less than three quarters for the Bullets, who are winless since losing rookie forward Juwan Howard to a sprained ankle. Cheaney cut his left eyelid in the third period and did not return.

The first quarter ended in a 41-41 tie. It was the most points in an opening period for both teams this season.

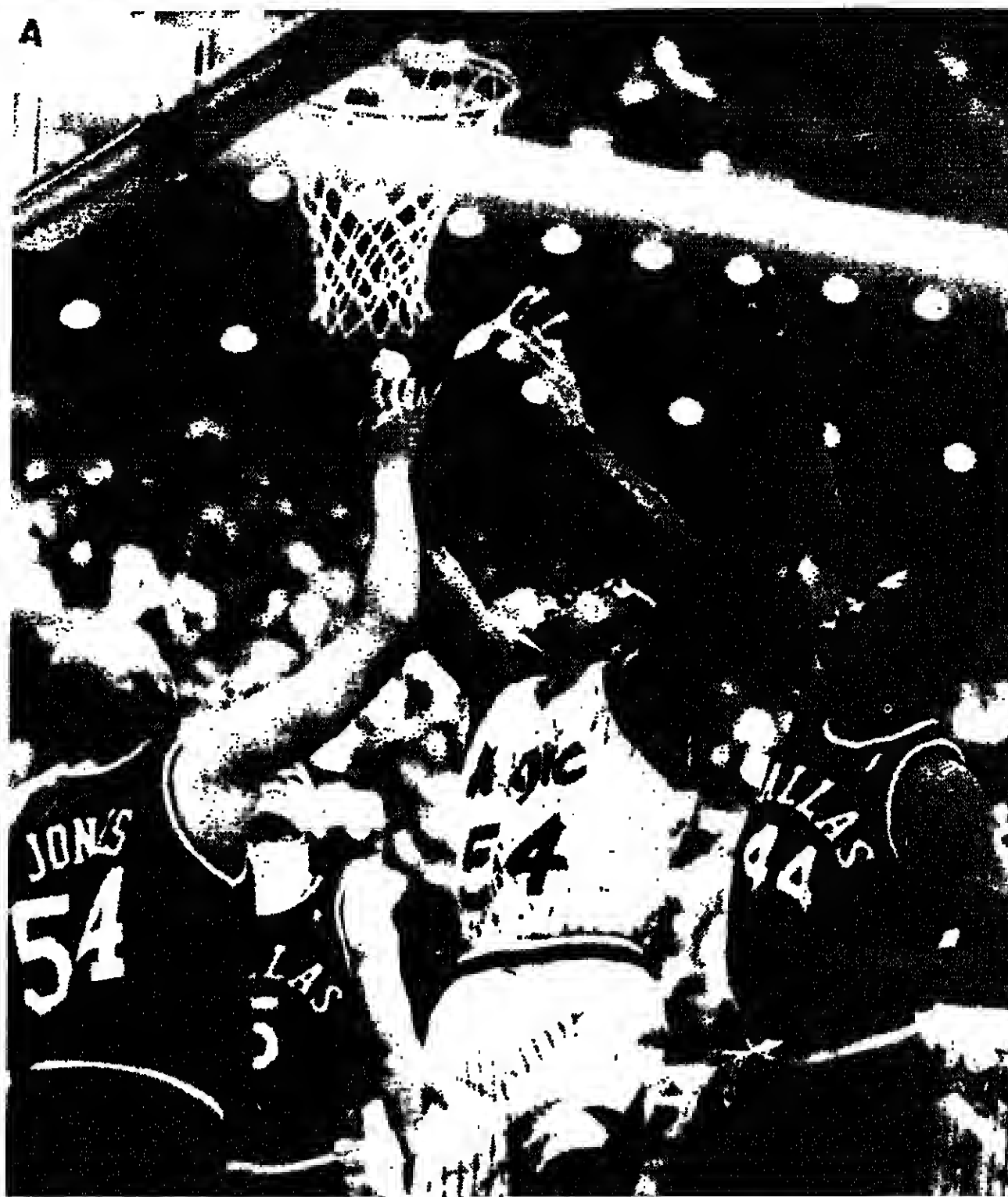
"It was a scary first half," Phoenix coach Paul Westphal said. "They were making everything they threw up. If they kept getting 41 a quarter they would have beat us, but I knew we had depth even though we have been struggling lately."

In Sacramento, Chuck Person's 16-foot jumper from the right wing at the buzzer lifted the San Antonio Spurs to their franchise record-tying 13th straight win, a 96-94 triumph over the Kings.

"I knew the shot was good," said Person. "I've been playing for 19 years and I've seen that shot a lot and I just take each shot one at a time."

"We've had a lot of success late in games," said Spurs Coach Bob Hill. "The team has confidence now, so we've been fortunate to win them."

Sacramento had tied the



Dallas Mavericks #54 Ron Jones left and #44 center Lorenzo Williams (right) fail to prevent Orlando Magic #54 forward Horace Grant from making a basket during their NBA game. The Magic won 110-92 (AFP photo)

game at 94-94 with 5.6 seconds left on a 3-pointer from the top of the key Spud Webb.

David Robinson scored 29 points and Sean Elliott added 18 for San Antonio, who improved to a league-best 54-18 and opened a two-game lead over Utah for the top spot in the Western Conference.

The Spurs are 10-0 since forward Dennis Rodman went down with a separated shoulder. San Antonio hasn't lost since a 110-104 setback at

Orlando on March 12. Miteb Richmond scored 24 points and rookie Brian Grant netted 22 for the Kings, who remained tied with Denver for the final Western Conference playoff spot.

In Denver, Detlef Schrempf scored 27 points and Shawn Kemp added 21 and 18 rebounds as the Seattle SuperSonics held onto first place in the Pacific Division with a 106-100 victory over the Nuggets.

Gary Payton added 21

points for the Sonics (52-21), who won for the eighth time in nine games and maintained their slim lead over second-place Phoenix (52-22).

Mabmoud Abdul-Rauf scored 29 points and Bryant Stith added 19 for the Nuggets (35-38), who fell out of a tie with Sacramento for the final playoff spot in the Western Conference.

At Golden State, Clyde Drexler scored 17 of his 40 points in the fourth quarter as the Houston Rockets rallied for a 110-102 victory over the Warriors.

Drexler scored nine points in an 18-2 run that started the final period, erasing an 84-76 Golden State lead after three quarters. Sam Cassell's 3-point play with 10:14 to play gave Houston the lead for good, 86-84.

Drexler scored the final four points of the run to give the Rockets a 94-86 lead and Golden State came no closer than five points thereafter.

Houston is without centre Hakeem Olajuwon and guard Vernon Maxwell.

"It was very important for us to get this win without two big guys, we showed some character tonight," Drexler said. "We've been playing all right lately. It was good to get over the hump and win."

Tim Legler scored a season-high 24 points and Donyell Marshall added 23 for Golden State, which has lost three of its last four games.

Houston moved to within three games of the idle Los Angeles Lakers for the fifth playoff spot in the Western Conference.

RESULTS

Phoenix	127	Washington	123
Seattle	106	Denver	100
Houston	110	Golden State	102
San Antonio	96	Sacramento	94

STANDINGS

Eastern Conference				
Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct.	GB
X-Orlando	54	19	.740	—
X-New York	48	25	.658	6
Boston	30	43	.411	24
Miami	29	45	.392	25½
New Jersey	27	46	.370	27
Philadelphia	20	53	.274	34
Washington	18	55	.247	36

Central Division

	W	L	Pct.	GB
X-Indiana	48	26	.649	—
X-Charlotte	44	28	.611	3
X-Chicago	40	33	.548	7½
X-Cleveland	39	34	.534	8½
Atlanta	36	37	.493	11½
Milwaukee	28	45	.384	19½
Detroit	26	46	.361	21

Western Conference

Midwest Division				
	W	L	Pct.	GB
X-San Antonio	54	18	.750	—
X-Utah	53	21	.716	2
Houston	43	30	.589	11½
Denver	35	38	.479	19½
Dallas	32	39	.451	21½
Minnesota	20	53	.274	34½

Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct.	GB
X-Seattle	52	21	.712	—
X-Phoenix	52	22	.703	½
X-L.A. Lakers	46	27	.630	6
Portland	38	34	.528	13½
Sacramento	35	38	.479	17
Golden State	23	50	.315	29
L.A. Clippers	15	59	.203	37½

Clinched playoff berth

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Poll vaulter killed in practice jump

ALBUQUERQUE, New Mexico (AP) — A 15-year-old high school pole vaulter died after bouncing off the landing mat and striking his head during a practice jump. Colin Larkin-Thomson, a Del Norte High School sophomore honors student, was pronounced dead at university hospital in this southwestern U.S. city. Albuquerque public schools spokesman Rick Murray said the vaulter had made five successful practice vaults during warmups at La Cueva High School before the fatal sixth attempt. He never regained consciousness, his parents said Thursday night. His heart, liver and kidneys all quickly found transplant recipients. "To know that his life already has saved four other people's lives — it's a perfect metaphor to me for who he was," said his father Robert Thomson.

Piane tail part falls on tennis court

DES MOINES, Washington (AP) — A piece of an airplane tail broke off of a Boeing 727 Delta jet and landed on a tennis court during a high school match, a U.S. official said. The 68-centimeter piece that weighed about eight ounces landed on Monday about six metres (18 feet) from the nearest person but no one was injured, said Mount Rainier High School principal Peter Ways. The plane had left Seattle-Tacoma airport and was headed for Los Angeles when the top of the tail broke off, though it posed no danger to the passengers, said Federal Aviation Administration spokesman Dick Meyer. Delta spokesman Clay McConnell said the piece was not essential to safe handling of a jet.

Cruyff sticking with Barcelona

BARCELONA (AFP) — Dutch coach Johan Cruyff has decided to stay with Barcelona, ending weeks of speculation that the most successful manager in the club's history was on his way out. "Everything is fine, we've agreed on everything," said Cruyff after a meeting on Thursday night with club President Jose Luis Nunez and vice-president Joan Gaspart. Cruyff had been threatening to quit because he felt undermined on certain team issues and was personally upset at local press treatment of his son and first team contender, Jordi. But after three hours with the club's top officials, Cruyff said: "I am happy and optimistic for the future."

Vilas wins Senior Circuit season debut

BOCA RATON, Florida (AP) — Guillermo Vilas held off Harold Solomon 6-1, 3-6, 7-5 in the first round of the \$150,000 Corel Champions, the season-opening event of the men's 35-and-over tour. In the ninth game of the third set, Vilas managed to hold serve to take a 5-4 lead and regain control. Vilas won five consecutive games to take the first set, but dropped five straight to lose the second. Solomon was up a break in the third before Vilas battled back to win in 2 hours, 21 minutes. Vilas advanced to the quarterfinals, where second-seeded Bjorn Borg awaits. Jimmy Connors is the top seed in the event, with \$40,000 going to the winner. This is the second season of the Champions Tour. There are 11 tournaments and, a total purse of \$2.5 million.

Martinez, Sabatini and Maleeva advance

AMELIA ISLAND, Florida (AP) — The top three seeds — Conchita Martinez, Gabriela Sabatini and Maggie Maleeva — advanced Thurs-

day to the quarterfinals on another windy, rainy day in the Bausch and Lomb Championships.

The bad weather forced a

five-hour delay of the start of play after halting matches Wednesday afternoon. Warmer, calmer and dryer weather is forecast for the last three days of the tournament.

Martinez, the top seed, routed Irina Spirles of Romania 6-1, 6-2 and will next face Amanda Coetzer. The No. 5 seed from South Africa defeated Virginia Ruano Pascual of Spain 7-5, 7-5.

"I think I played a near perfect game today," said Martinez, who is looking for her second straight victory following last week's triumph at the Family Circle Magazine Cup at Hilton Head Island, South Carolina.

"That's not easy to do, as Irina is a good player," Martinez said. "There were some difficult points out there that could have gone either way."

No. 2 Sabatini won her second straight match in a romp, overwhelming fellow Argentine Bettina Fulco-Villa 6-1, 6-0. Sabatini will next play another compatriot, No. 6 Ines Gorrochategui, a 6-2, 7-5 winner over Wiltrud Probst of Germany.

"I feel very good about my game," said Sabatini who has lost only one game in two matches. "I've got a lot of confidence in the way I'm playing, more so than a year ago at this time. That's from winning some key matches in recent months."

Maleeva, the No. 3 seed, lost her opening set to Chanda Rubin of Lafayette, La., before rebounding for a 2-6, 6-3, 6-0 win and the right to take on Italy's Laurence Courtois. Courtois surprised No. 7 Zina Garrison Jackson of Houston 6-1, 3-6, 6-4, in one of the two three-set matches of the third round.

VACANCY WANTED

A Jordanian national with the following qualifications seeks job with a regional or international firm:

- British graduate.
- 13 years experience in chemical industry (senior post)
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Interested parties please fax 656336

PRIZES FOR YOUNG JORDANIAN SCIENTISTS "Trying is Winning"

Working toward enhancing scientific manpower in Jordan, prizes for young scientists are now granted for Jordanians by the Third World Academy of Sciences (TWAS) in collaboration with the Royal Scientific Society (RSS). Submission for these prizes is open till October 1995.

The prize is awarded every year rotating among four fields of pure science: **Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics and Physics**. Young Jordanian scientists are now invited to apply for the **TWAS Prize** which amounts to **\$2,000. Mathematics and Physics will be considered in the contest for the prize in the next two years.**

So, if you are a Jordanian, resident in Jordan, and of age not exceeding 40 years, we will be glad to receive your contribution in any of the two fields mentioned above, taking into consideration that submission is open till October 1995. We are ready to provide you with any additional information about the rules & mechanism of submission.

Interested applicants are kindly requested to contact **Mrs. Majd Khayyat Talhouni** at the following address:

The TWAS Unit
Royal Scientific Society
P.O. Box 925819, Amman-Jordan
Fax: 844886, Tel: 844701, Telex: 21276 RAMAH JO

April

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Aum sect had sarin — reports

TOKYO (Agencies) — Japanese police said Friday that the Aum Supreme Truth religious sect, under probe for possible involvement in the Tokyo subway nerve gas attack, had sarin gas in their base, Jiji Press reported.

The report came after police on Friday discovered by-products of the sarin nerve gas at the central Japanese base, following a series of raids on sect premises during which large amounts of chemicals suitable for producing the toxic gas were seized.

Sarin gas, developed by Nazi Germany, was used in the Tokyo subway attack last month which killed 11 people.

Police on Friday discovered traces of chemical substances called methylphosphoric acid monoisopropyl on equipment confiscated from the sect's chemical plant in the compound, Kyodo News Service said.

A police source told Kyodo that the discovery further strengthened suspicions that the cult was involved in the subway attack.

Police are likely to launch a full investigation into the cult over the subway attack and another gas poisoning that killed seven people and injured 200 in Matsumoto, central Japan last June, Jiji said.

Police also suspect that Aum was secretly manufacturing guns at its facility in Tomizawa, Yamaguchi prefecture, police sources told Kyodo Friday.

Investigators found machine tools suitable for producing gun parts at the

facility during a search Tuesday, the sources said.

The nation's police chief, who was in charge of the investigation into the Aum and the gas attack, was shot and seriously injured in Tokyo. No arrests have yet been made.

The sect has denied any involvement in the two gas attacks and the assassination attempt.

Two days after the attacks, police launched a series of raids on Aum facilities, concentrating on complexes at Kamiku Isobiki, a village at the foot of Mount Fuji, 100 kilometres west of Tokyo.

They have found vast chemical stockpiles that include all the ingredients of sarin, sophisticated laboratory equipment, secret plants and documents. But they have yet to find evidence to link the cult to the attacks.

Police are investigating Aum under suspicion of "preparation for murder" but nearly three weeks after the subway attacks no formal charges have been laid. Even if police establish that sarin gas was present at the cult facility, they must show that the sect actually made it.

NHK Television said police will likely dismantle a sophisticated, large-scale, chemical facility at a complex known as the seventh satian, after the Sanskrit word for truth.

If they discover either sarin or the chemical which was reported found on Friday, this will constitute evidence the cult was making the lethal nerve gas, NHK said.



MEMORIES OF WAR: A rescue runs with an injured baby after the explosion of a car bomb in the Sinn Al Fil quarter of Beirut, which brought down several buildings, killing 55 people and wounding 125 others on May 22, 1985. It was the most powerful blast in the

Christian sector in nearly three years since the Lebanese president-elect, Beshir Gemayal, died in an explosion in 1982. The Lebanese civil war broke out 20 years ago in April 13, 1975 (AFP photo)

Moderates win writers association elections

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Novelist and scriptwriter Ibrahim Abi on Friday won the presidency of the Jordanian Writers Association (JWA) with 120 votes against his main rival, Salem Nahhas, who got 93 votes.

Mr. Abi headed the "Democratic Cultural" stream against the "fighting normalisation" stream headed by Mr. Nahhas.

The only other candidate for the presidency, Aischa Khawajeh Al Razem, received only nine votes. Nine blank votes were cast. Three other candidates, Hisham Gharaibeh, Issa Jarajera and Saoud Qubeilat, withdrew from the race.

There has been no radical change on the overall structure of the association's administration itself. Mr. Abi's group won seven out of ten seats of the administrative committee in comparison with six in the previous one.

Twenty-six candidates were competing for the 10 administrative committee seats. The two main streams within the association ran in two main blocs fielding 20 candidates.

Six others ran as independents, but all lost.

The democratic cultural stream's seven successful candidates were: Basel Rafai'eh: 116 votes, Abdullah Radwan: 110 votes, Mohammad Al Amiri: 97 votes, Suleiman Al Azu'ri: 96 votes, Salah Jara: 95 votes and Rawda Al Hudhud (the only female member): 87 votes.

The bloc headed by Mr. Nahhas won only three seats with its candidates: Yousef Abdul Aziz: 100 votes, Mounaq Mahadin: 93 votes, and Hisham Ghassib: 88 votes.

Four members were announced as reserve members: Ibrahim Khatib, Mohammad Lafi, Ramadan Rawasbdeh and Mustafa Saleh.

The JWA has 365 members; 231 members have voted out of 244 members who had the right to vote after paying all dues to the association.

Mr. Mahaddin described the results as "worse than before" but vowed that the three hardliners within the

(Continued on page 7)

Doctors vote, say they will not follow directive to exclude West Bankers

By Beatrix Immenkamp
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Jordanian Medical Association (JMA) held its general elections on Friday and association sources said the 7,521-member group would challenge a Ministry of Health decision to exclude West Bank doctors from its executive council.

Ishaq Maraka, the incumbent JMA president, said "it was too late" for the association to abide by a ministry directive that all 10 members of the council be elected in Friday's elections in Amman as opposed to the practice of electing nine members in Amman and the 10th in elections in Jerusalem to be held

at a later date.

The Ministry of Health also said that it would appoint the candidate who received the 10th highest votes in Friday's elections as the 10th member of the council regardless of the association's approach.

The demanded change in the electoral process would effectively lead to the cancellation of a seat reserved for West Bank doctors, on the 10-member executive council.

Dr. Maraka told the Jordan Times that the Ministry of Health's directive, signed by acting Minister of Health Abdul Razak Ensour, had reached the association late Thursday. As such, he said,

(Continued on page 7)

Jerusalem cleric urges peaceful holy war

CAIRO (AFP) — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)-appointed mufti of Jerusalem backed calls for a jihad to end Israeli occupation of East Jerusalem but added it did not have to mean a Muslim holy war.

"It is a duty of all Muslims to stand together to liberate Holy Jerusalem and return it to Arab and Islamic sovereignty," Sheikh Akram Sabri told the London-based Arab daily Al Sharq Al Awsat.

"However, jihad is not necessarily a holy war, it means using any methods possible to return Jerusalem," he added.

Sheikh Sabri said the 1993 Israeli-Palestinian autonomy agreements had "become in the hands of (Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak) Rabin merely ink on paper."

Since the signing of the accords, "nothing has changed. Blood is still flowing, the honour of Palestinians is still being violated and massacres by the occupying forces are continuing," he added.

He rejected an international administration for Jerusalem — the eastern sector of which the Jewish state has "annexed" — as "another mask for Israeli occupation." The mufti, who is also the

imam of Al Aqsa Mosque, said Israeli excavations beneath Islam's third holiest shrine were "still going on and have caused more than 400 cracks in the mosque's walls."

He called for handing responsibility for protecting Islamic sites in Jerusalem over to "an Islamic authority from various Islamic countries until Jerusalem is liberated from occupation and becomes the Palestinian capital."

Sheikh Sabri, who was appointed as mufti by PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, rejected Jordan's custodianship over the city's Muslim shrines, underlining that "Al Aqsa Mosque is Palestinian."

"Jordan has no right to demand administration of these sites nor is there any historical claim justifying Jordanian authority over Jerusalem," he contended.

In October, Jordan appointed Sheikh Abdul Qadir Abdin as mufti of Jerusalem, on the same day that Mr. Arafat named Sheikh Sabri to the position.

Sheikh Sabri said that Jordan was not the only Muslim country financing the administration and maintenance of the holy sites, which cost \$20 million a year.

COLUMN

Police search for 'silver bible' thieves

STOCKHOLM (AP) — Officials offered a 100,000-kronor (\$14,000) reward for information leading to the arrest of two men who entered an exhibition and stole part of a rare 6th-century bible. The handwritten manuscript, known as the Silver Bible, was seized as loot by Swedish troops in Prague in 1648 near the end of the 30-year war. It is considered one of Sweden's national treasures. The theft occurred during opening hours Wednesday at the Uppsala University Library, about 60 kilometres (35 miles) north of Stockholm. Police said they could track the thieves' trail only as far as a nearby park. "It's not a matter of life and death, but it's bad enough. It's as if the Mona Lisa had been stolen," Uppsala Police Chief Lars Nylen told reporters. No demands for ransom have been made. Art experts and police said the stolen pages would be impossible to sell on the open market. Museum officials said the artifact was not insured because the premium would have been too expensive. The thieves smashed a plate-glass case and ripped out two pages and a copy of the original silver cover from the Bible. The original cover and the other pages are stored in another part of the library. The bible manuscript was written with gold and silver ink. It contains the four gospels which were translated into Gothic by Bishop Ulfilas in the 4th century. The manuscript is one of the few existing remnants of Gothic, an early Germanic language. Sweden has declined a request by Czech President Vaclav Havel to return the Bible to his country.

Cardinal accused of sexual abuse resigns post

VIENNA, Austria (AP) — In his first reaction to mounting criticism, a Roman Catholic cardinal accused of sexually abusing students in the 1970s stepped down Thursday as head of the Austrian Bishops' Conference. Cardinal Hans-Hermann Groer gave up the post just two days after being narrowly reelected. Still, the 75-year-old Archbishop of Vienna remained silent about the allegations, first published 10 days ago. However, Thursday's move indicated he probably also would resign as archbishop. Fellow bishops initially expressed support for Arch. Groer, and newspapers in this predominantly Catholic country were cautious with the story or even ignored it. But as more people came forward claiming to have been abused, pressure mounted on Arch. Groer to break his silence. On Thursday, Austria's biggest Roman Catholic lay group, Catholic Action, demanded a church investigation of Arch. Groer. In addition, the main Catholic Youth organisation insisted on a statement from his to salvage what it called the church's "massively damaged" credibility.

Police ban Bombay riots film

BOMBAY (R) — Police banned the screening of a controversial film about Hindu-Muslim riots in Bombay due for release Friday, after Muslim leaders protested that it implied they had instigated the bloodshed. A police spokesman said the order barring the screening of the film "Bombay" applied only to Bombay. The film is set against the backdrop of 1993 riots in which 800 people were killed in India's commercial capital. The spokesman told reporters the ban was imposed because police feared the film could spark trouble in the city of 12 million people. Muslim leaders requested a private screening of the film, which used to have the reputation of a tolerant cosmopolitan city, was the worst hit in nationwide communal violence in which some 2,500 people were killed, most of them Muslims. Censors, treading gingerly on a subject as sensitive as the riots, had earlier referred the movie Bombay to every conceivable authority before passing it. Muslim groups had said they were incensed by the film and had planned to demonstrate against it.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

U.S. seeks to keep Libya off Security Council

WASHINGTON (AFP) — A top U.S. official described as "repugnant" Thursday the idea of Libya holding a seat on the U.N. Security Council and said the United States was lobbying against it at the United Nations. "We are waging a vigorous diplomatic effort to thwart seating this international pariah on the Security Council," Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau told a congressional committee. "Libya's position on the Security Council would give it frequent opportunities to oppose international cooperation on a range of important issues," Mr. Pelletreau said. "It is also repugnant to consider Security Council membership for a nation in flagrant violation of the council's resolution and so clearly opposed to the character and principles of the body."

Mystery woman found in island cave

NICOSIA (AFP) — A mystery woman was found in a cave in a remote corner of Cyprus where she had lived for three weeks and taken to hospital suffering from dehydration and lack of food, police said Friday. The woman, aged 45 to 50, was discovered Wednesday after a tip-off from a village in the Polis area in the Akamas peninsula, some 100 kilometres northwest of Nicosia, police spokesman Savvas Antoniadou told AFP. The woman has no identification papers but was believed to be a foreigner. She has so far remained silent and her only communication was to draw a boat on a piece of paper.

Fugitive in Lockheed case arrested in Syria

ATLANTA (AP) — A former Lockheed Corporation executive who fled after being indicted on federal bribery charges has been arrested in his native Syria, federal officials said Thursday. Suleiman Nasser, a former executive of Lockheed's international division in Geneva, had been a fugitive since last June. He was indicted along with Lockheed and another executive on charges of conspiring to bribe an Egyptian legislator to promote the sale to Egypt of cargo planes made at Lockheed's Marietta, Georgia, plant. Mr. Nasser had promised to appear in Atlanta for arraignment June 28, but instead he fled from Geneva to Syria, said Martin Weinstein, an assistant U.S. attorney in Atlanta. He said Mr. Nasser was arrested March 20 by Syrian authorities and is being held at Adra prison, about 50 kilometres north of Damascus. "The United States had known he was in Syria," Mr. Weinstein said. Mr. Weinstein declined to say what efforts are being made to bring Mr. Nasser to Atlanta to stand trial. He noted that there is no extradition treaty between Syria and the United States.

Iran, Russia sign transportation agreements

NICOSIA (AP) — Russia and Iran have signed agreements to boost rail and sea links and establish a joint shipbuilding company, the Islamic Republic News Agency reported Friday. The agency, monitored in Cyprus, said that according to an agreement signed Thursday between Iran's Transportation Minister Akbar Torkan and his Russian counterpart, Vitali Yefimov, Iranian ships will call at the Russian port of Astrakhan as of July 1. The agreement calls for cooperation in shipbuilding and related equipment, IRNA said. It said a separate agreement calls for a rail link between the two neighbouring countries. An air link between Astrakhan and the northern Iranian province of Gilan and the possibility of a joint rail and sea link which would stretch all the way south to the Gulf also is under study.

Cypriot sportsmen leave Turkey happy

ANKARA (R) — The Republic of Cyprus handball team left for home on Friday with "happy memories" after playing a European cup game against political rival Turkey, the Anatolian news agency said. "We are leaving Turkey, with very happy memories which we won't forget. Together we have proved once again that sports is victorious over politics," said Yiangos Demetriou, Cypriot handball federation chief, before the team flew from Istanbul. The Turkish government broke with precedent last month by sending the national team to play against Greek Cypriots in their side of divided Cyprus.

Sudan, Russia in military talks

KHARTOUM (R) — Military co-operation talks between Sudan and Russia ended in Khartoum on Thursday, state television announced. The report said the talks were held at the general command, the headquarters of the Sudanese army, with the Sudanese side headed by Lieutenant-General Faisal Mohammad Sinada.

Dembri: No civil war in Algeria

LONDON (AFP) — Algerian Foreign Minister Mohammed Salah Dembri denied Friday that his country was in the throes of civil war, and said that estimates of up to 40,000 dead in the three-year conflict were "exaggerated."

Referring to an "official communiqué of the national observatory of human rights," Mr. Dembri told a news conference here that "fewer than 10,000" people had been killed in the conflict between militants and the military-backed government.

Asked about a two-week-old government offensive against the armed militants, Mr. Dembri said "Algeria is not a country engaged in civil war."

He added: "There is some activity by some armed groups, and this activity is currently confronted by the action of our own security services."

He refused to give any casualty toll from the operations which according to Algerian press estimates have left up to 2,800 dead.

The London-based Arab daily Al Sharq Al Awsat reported Friday that the banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) accused the Algerian government of killing thousands of civilians in its latest offensive.

Mr. Dembri also said that a peace plan adopted by the main Algerian opposition parties was "already outdated" because several opposition leaders have agreed to hold talks with the government.

"Now that the resumption of dialogue in Algeria is happening with the parties present in Rome, on the basis of new proposals, the (Rome) platform is historically out of date," Mr. Dembri said.

He said that the main thing is that the dialogue is happening in Algeria between Algerians.

Eight Algerian opposition movements, including the FIS, adopted in January a plan in Rome notably calling for unconditional negotiations with the Algiers government and the liberation of jailed FIS leaders.

The FIS was outlawed after the government cancelled the second round of elections in January 1992 that the FIS was poised to win.

Asked about the absence of the FIS in the dialogue, Mr. Dembri said that "contacts are under way with those of its leaders able to contribute to the reinforcement of national dialogue."

Arabs pressured to back NPT extension — Syria

BEIRUT (Agencies) — Syria, saying Arab states were being subjected to "big pressures" to back the extension of a treaty banning the spread of nuclear weapons, urged them on Friday not to budge until Israel signed it.

Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa said he hoped Arab states would stand united on refusing to vote at a U.N. conference opening in New York on April 17 for an indefinite extension of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) unless Israel joined the treaty.

"It is unfortunate there are big pressures being applied on the Arab states while no pressure is being put on Israel to join this treaty," Mr. Sharaa told Beirut's Future Television in an interview.

"If it is assured that there is commitment to the letter and spirit of the (March 23) resolution issued unanimously by the Arab League then the Arabs would have taken a united stand on the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty — that they will not accept to join unless Israel joined," Dr. Sharaa added.

Arab League members' foreign ministers, meeting in Cairo in March, said in a resolution that it was "dangerous and unacceptable" that Israel remain outside the 25-year-old treaty.

But they failed to agree what to do if it rejected to join.

Some Arab countries have dismissed any link between Israel's position and their stand on the NPT.

Israel, widely believed to have some 200 nuclear warheads, has refused to sign the

NPT, saying it would do so only when comprehensive Middle East peace is reached, including with countries like Iran, Iraq and Libya, which the Jewish state says want to destroy it.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said on Wednesday it would be a grave mistake to make support for extending the treaty conditional on actions by countries outside the treaty — a clear reference to Israel.

Mr. Sharaa said: "There is a grave contradiction when ... they tell the Arabs you have to back the indefinite extension of the treaty and you should not put any conditions before joining this treaty while they do not talk with Israel about the necessity that it should join too and not put conditions."

No Egypt-Israel deal

Israel and Egypt failed to reach agreement Thursday in talks seeking ways in which the two countries might join the NPT.

"Our position has not changed," Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa said after a 90-minute meeting with Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres in a Paris hotel.

The two officials met in the wake of a call by the United States for direct negotiations between the two within the framework of the treaty, which Egypt refuses to sign as long as Israel is not bound by the pact's limitations.

"We met in the framework of a discussion," and will meet again after consulting with the home governments, Mr. Musa said.

FBI informant says he has stopped lying

NEW YORK (AP) — After befriending people in America by telling them lies, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) informant Emad Salem has testified that the World Trade Centre bombing convinced him he had to tell the truth to stop other attacks.

Mr. Salem on Thursday told a federal court jury in the trial of Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman and 10 others that the Feb. 26, 1993, bombing helped him overcome his fear of losing his anonymity by taking the witness stand.

"I felt obligations; either I keep the boosted image I created on lies... or smash this image and go back to work for the FBI," he said.

Mr. Salem has testified that he lied to nearly everyone he met when he entered the United States in 1987 after retiring from 17 years in the Egyptian army.

He said he boasted of

being wounded as a bodyguard at the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat even though he was not a bodyguard and was not injured. He also claimed he personally knew the leaders of Iraq and Libya and the military capabilities of Middle East countries even though he did not.

He has said he stopped working as an informant for the FBI in July 1992 because he did not want to tape record conversations and testify, out of fear his family would be harmed.

The defendants are accused of conspiring to terrorise the United States with bombing, killings and assassinations to force the United States to change its Middle East policies, especially towards Israel and Egypt.

Mr. Salem defended his motives Thursday for returning to work for the FBI after the trade centre bombing,

which killed six people and injured more than 1,000.

"I felt I was obligated to smash this image and admit my sins in front of everybody here and go back because I know that's not the last bombing," he said.

Asked about one of the defendants, Mr. Salem said he "liked certain parts in the man, but I hated the person who wanted to build bombs to kill innocent people."

"Anyone who builds bombs and had no remorse in his heart and his brain to blow bombs, I believe that he is a terrorist," Mr. Salem added.

Defence lawyer John Jacobs accused him of trying to blackmail the FBI into paying a large sum of money for his work by threatening to disclose that "the agency did not pay attention in 1992 when he warned bombings were likely."

"No sir, I was protecting myself," Mr. Salem told Mr. Jacobs, saying he feared the FBI would accuse him of participating in the bombing. Mr. Salem said he secretly taped conversations with FBI agents so he could reveal them if the agency turned against him.

Mr. Jacobs questioned him about a conversation between an FBI agent and Mr. Salem in which the informant said the trade centre bomb was "built by uh, uh, uh, supervising, supervision from the bureau, and the D.A. and we were all informed about it. And we know that the bomb start to be built. By who? By your confidential informant."

Mr. Salem has testified that he warned the FBI in 1992 that Sheikh Abdul Rahman's group was planning to bomb several New York city landmarks, but he did not specify the trade centre.

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